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TALES

FOR

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR CHILDREN.

THE TWIN SISTERS.

BY MRS. SANDHAM.

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THE

TWIN SISTERS;

A TALE FOR YOUTH.

BY MRS. SANDHAM.

"O Sacred Solitude! divine retreat!
Choice of the prudent, wisdom of the great!
By thy pure stream, or in thy waving shade,
We court fair Wisdom, that celestial maid!"

FROM THE TWENTIETH LONDON EDITION.

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MDCCCXLII.

PREFACE.

THE following work is intended to display the benefits of devotion, which are illustrated in the lives of two very young persons, whose pursuits were not the vanities of the world, but the true and lasting pleasures of religion, and time well spent.

There are few, even of those who do not study to live by its rules, that are not willing to acknowledge the efficacy of religion in the hour of death, or on a bed of sickness; though they are inclined to put off all thoughts of it till that awful period. But in this short history will be seen, (and the truth of the illustration may be perceived by general observation,) that if the duties of a Christian profession are not attended to in our lives, its support and consolations in those trying scenes cannot be felt either by the dying or their surviving friends.

This important truth has, no doubt, been often enforced on many of my young readers, and in a way more large and comprehensive than in this simple tale: yet, as, after having observed a charming view of nature reflected in a mirror, where each object, though lessened to our sight, is distinctly seen, and bears its due proportion to the whole, we are still inclined to survey the scene itself, and perhaps with more accurate attention than before; it is hoped that this feeble attempt to exemplify the satisfaction arising from a religious life will not therefore be altogether useless or unentertaining.

THE

TWIN SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"Fancy and pride seek things at vast expense,
Which relish not the reason nor the sense."
YOUNG.

WHEN nearly five years old, Ellen and Anna Stanley, twin sisters, were left to the care of an aunt—not owing to the death of their parents, but to their removal from England to the East Indies, being allured by the hope of obtaining some of those riches which have too often drawn the inhabitants of this island thither, and made them abandon their children to the care of less affectionate guardians than these little girls found in Mrs. Irvin. It might have been supposed that, having only these two children, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley could not have admitted a thought of a separation from them, and that while they could have promised themselves the satisfaction of leaving them a handsome fortune, they would have endeavored, by attending to their education, to instruct them in the proper use of it; but such was not the conduct of those votaries of dissipation. They had lived among those whose riches seemed

the only means of procuring happiness ; and while Mr. Stanley daily saw his wealthy neighbors enjoying new amusements, he had not the wisdom to reflect, that none of their pursuits could afford them lasting pleasure ; or why would they be so often changed for others ? He thought that variety is the chief source of happiness, which, in a thinking mind, will cause a doubt of its reality. Both Mr. and Mrs. Stanley were fond of society, and lived much beyond their income, in endeavoring to keep what is called the best company. While this was the case, it cannot be imagined that they could behold with much pleasure those children whom they were confessedly injuring, in what they deemed the most essential requisite of life—their fortune, and to obtain an increase of which they afterward parted from them for so long a time.

It was just before this separation that Mrs. Irvin, the sister of Mrs. Stanley, after having refused many former invitations, came to town. She had lived for several years in the country, with a husband whom she much valued and esteemed, and whose death she had mourned the last two years. Having no family of her own, and blessed with an ample fortune, she followed his example in considering the neighboring poor as her peculiar charge : nor did she find so much gratification in any pleasure the world could afford her, as in contributing to their welfare. Such sentiments as these, frequently expressed in her letters to her sister, excited her surprise, especially after Mr. Irvin's death, when she expected she would declare herself tired of the uniform life

she had led with him, and be impatient to return to society. "While he lived," she would say, "she did not so much wonder at her sister's wish to avoid the world, as he was so strange and unaccountable a man, that he could make no figure in it; but that for two years after his death she should remain in solitude, was a circumstance that she could not account for."

The truth was, nothing but the wish of seeing the children of her sister could have induced Mrs. Irvin once more to visit London; but when she considered, that they were now old enough to be instructed in many things, and yet found no mention made of them in any of their mother's letters, and that the general answer to all her inquiries was, that they were "very well," while every other part was filled with accounts of *balls*, *routs*, and *dining parties*, in which she was continually engaged, she thought it her duty to endeavor, by every means in her power, to promote their education.

On her arrival in Portman-square, where Mr. and Mrs. Stanley then resided, she was struck with the alteration she perceived in the latter, whose dress and manners were in the extremity of the fashion; and highly painted as she was, she could scarcely discover any traces of the sister she had twelve years before parted from with so much regret. At that time Mrs. Stanley was between eighteen and nineteen, and lived with this her only sister, who was several years older than herself, and had then been married some time to Mr. Irvin. While under their roof, she received an invitation to town for the first time in

her life ; and, new as all its pleasures were to her, she earnestly entreated her sister's consent to accept of it. Mr. and Mrs. Irvin were then her only guardians, as their father had died soon after the marriage of his eldest daughter. Unable to refuse her request, they parted from her with visible reluctance, yet unwilling to express their disapprobation ; while she, though attached to her sister from childhood, could not now feel regret at leaving her, to taste of enjoyments she had long eagerly wished for, and to enter on a scene of life in which she had been taught to expect their daily increase. Full of pleasing anticipations, she came to London ; and, by the mistaken kindness of her friends, was immediately plunged into all its gayeties. At one-and-twenty, she married Mr. Stanley, with whom she continued the same round of dissipation, unconcerned at what her sister, whom she had formerly thought her best adviser, might think of her, and to whose remonstrances she paid but little attention. The embarrassment of their affairs would now and then cause a sigh of regret in Mrs. Stanley, till the fear of reflection made her enter still deeper into the pursuits of fashionable life ; so that when Mrs. Irvin again met her sister, she found her a complete fine lady, insensible to any affection which terminated not in *self;* negligent of her children ; and, under the mask of happiness, concealing the uneasiness which, notwithstanding all her endeavors to avoid, would often arise in her mind, when conscience, whose voice will and must be heard by all, whispered to her that she was wrong.

As Mrs. Irvin came in her own carriage, she was two days on the road, and reached the house of her sister before their usual dinner-hour. She was received by Mrs. Stanley without the emotions my readers would suppose so long an absence would create; and the plain and simple dress her sister wore, attracted her attention much more than the affectionate manner in which she addressed her.

After answering the inquiries that Mrs. Stanley thought it civil to make, Mrs. Irvin expressed a wish to be introduced to the children.—"Would you see them directly?" said Mrs. Stanley, with indifference; "I doubt whether they are dressed or not;" and ringing the bell, she ordered the servant to tell Martin to bring the young ladies to her. This was a summons so new to them, that it was with difficulty they could be persuaded to enter the room; where, they were told, "a lady that was come to stay with their mamma wanted to see them."

At length two sweet little girls made their appearance at the parlor door, attended by an elderly servant, on whom they seemed to depend for direction and support. The countenance and the dress of each were nearly alike; and Mrs. Irvin looked at them with pleasure, though she could ill conceal her feelings of regret when she perceived that they seemed equally fearful of approaching their mother and herself, to whom they were quite unknown.

"It is, as I have told you in my letters," said Mrs. Stanley, with an air of unconcern, "that nobody but their maids are allowed to come

near them. Martin, do you lead them to their aunt."

Martin obeyed her order; and Mrs. Irvin rose to meet the little strangers. "My dears," said she, "I am your aunt; won't you let me kiss you?" And she took a hand of each.—"They are sweet children," said she to her sister; "which is Ellen? and which is Anna, my namesake?"

"Upon my word," said Mrs. Stanley, "you almost puzzle me."

"I am Ellen," said the little blushing girl, who still retained her hand in that of her aunt, while her sister had withdrawn hers, and was endeavoring to hide her face in Martin's gown: "I am Ellen Stanley," said she, as she received an affectionate kiss from her delighted aunt.

"This, then, is Anna," said she, drawing the other child toward her: "come, my little namesake, you must let me kiss you likewise:" and she took the trembling child on her lap. Ellen approached also, and while she held the hand of her sister, they both appeared to receive pleasure from the caresses of their new friend.

"You are highly honored," said Mrs. Stanley, not a little chagrined at the preference the children had given. "I dare say I could not get either of them to sit on my knee:—will you come to me, Ellen?" added she, stretching out her hand. The little girl looked at Martin with surprise; and reading in her looks what she ought to do, she walked toward her mother with a mixture of fear and diffidence, that made her still more interesting. Mrs. Stanley received her complacently, and kissed her cheek with an ap-

pearance of more affection than she had ever shown before. Ellen was delighted with this unexpected mark of favor from her mother, and looked toward her sister, as if she wished it could be bestowed on her also. For this purpose Mrs. Irvin put her off her lap; and no sooner did she find herself at liberty, than she returned to Martin, who, taking her hand, seemed to direct her to approach her mother, that she might also receive the long-withheld token of her regard.

"What! must I kiss you also?" said Mrs. Stanley, not displeased at her coming toward her: "come along, then: why, child, do you look so frightened?" observing the tears in her eyes; "do you think that I shall eat you?"

Anna had no sooner received the kiss so strangely offered, than she again returned to Martin, looking toward the door, as if wishing for their dismissal.

"You may take them away, Martin," said their mother: "I can see they are impatient to be gone; they are never happy out of their nursery; I never saw such shy children in my life."

"Good by, my dear children," said Mrs. Irvin: "I hope we shall soon be better acquainted."

As she once more kissed the glowing faces of the little girls, her voice and manners were so much kinder than what they had been used to, that they already began to feel a pleasure in her company, and seemed less inclined to leave the room, till Mrs. Stanley again repeated her commands. They made their courtesies and retired, pleased with the notice their aunt had taken of them.

As soon as they were gone, Mrs. Stanley wished to talk on some other subject; and, instead of inquiring her sister's opinion respecting them, she began to give her an account of the numerous acquaintances she could introduce her to: but Mrs. Irvin paid very little attention to the long list of names she ran over, and repeated the pleasure she felt in seeing the children. "They are much more sociable than I expected," said she, "confined as they are to the nursery: do you often visit them there?"

"I did," replied Mrs. Stanley (with a countenance expressive of some confusion at the question), "before Martin had the care of them, as often as my numerous engagements would allow; but now she takes so much care of them, that my attendance is not necessary. She dresses them properly enough, and makes them very well behaved. Their shyness, I believe, never will be gotten over; and there is no pleasure in going to see them, when it appears to give them such uneasiness."

"Perhaps that might be removed, if they were more accustomed to your company," said Mrs. Irvin, much hurt at the indifference which her sister expressed. The ladies now separated to dress for dinner; at which time Mrs. Irvin was introduced to Mr. Stanley, who welcomed her to his house with great politeness, in that softened manner which is too often adopted to conceal contempt and dislike. Such in his heart did Mr. Stanley feel for his guest, though he had afterward reason to acknowledge himself under infinite obligations to her, for relieving him when

most distressed; for, on the very next day, he found that the situation of his affairs could no longer be concealed; and with the utmost indifference he told his wife, that, "unless she could obtain assistance from her sister, they were utterly ruined." For any one to live beyond their income is now become so fashionable a folly (not to call it by a harsher name), that neither Mr. nor Mrs. Stanley dreaded the imputation of it; but when, on a closer examination of their affairs, it was discovered that not even the whole of their property would pay the numerous debts they had contracted, then it was that the friendship of Mrs. Irvin appeared in its true light; she prevailed on the friends of her late husband to procure for Mr. Stanley an advantageous post in the East Indies, and offered to educate the children at her own expense.

"Can you indeed be so generous?" said Mr. Stanley, struck with the sincerity of her professions. "How have I been deceived by those who call themselves my friends! No one would interest himself about me when I solicited his assistance: each excused himself from troubling his acquaintance on my account; but you, to whom I am so little known, you have indeed been my best friend!"

"Since you allow me that title," said Mrs. Irvin, "will you suffer me, in one other instance, to prove how much I wish to deserve it? You acknowledge that your present distress is occasioned by your having lived in too expensive a style: I forbear to censure; but now that you are entering on another scene of life, allow me to hope that

you will gain wisdom from experience; your situation will be changed, your former associates forgotten: let me advise you, then, to be careful with whom you again become acquainted, lest you should a second time be led into error. But I ought to beg your pardon for offering my advice; a sensible man will judge for himself whether what I have said is wrong."

Then turning to her sister, the tears started in her eyes on perceiving the wounded feelings of her mind strongly portrayed in her countenance. Pride, shame, envy, with some degree of grateful affection, alternately appeared there; while Mrs. Irvin thus addressed her:—"My dearest sister, I wish I could persuade you to seek that happiness which proceeds from a higher source than the vain applause of this world; be assured the knowledge of ourselves is the truest wisdom; and now that I am to act the part of a mother to your children, it shall be my sincere endeavor to instruct them in it." With much emotion she continued:—"It is probable that in this world we may never meet again; but, by the remembrance of former years, and by the strong attachment which once subsisted between us, let me beg you my beloved sister, seriously to consider for what end you are living; and may your reflections be such as to produce the most lasting happiness! Should I die before your return, the children shall be taken care of, and I trust you will not find them injured by my instruction. Believe me," added she, with increased affection, "the eternal happiness both of them and yourself is among the first wishes of my heart."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Stanley were affected by this solemn address: they no longer looked on the manner and appearance of Mrs. Irvin as subjects of derision, but endeavored to express their thanks, while she hurried out of the room to conceal her emotion. They could not deny the truth of what she had said respecting their former pursuits, and at that moment felt resolved to follow her advice in their future conduct.

Perhaps, young as my readers may be, they have themselves formed good resolutions in the hour of reflection, which not long after have been forgotten: they may know by experience how hard it is to conquer bad habits, and therefore will not wonder if they hear that Mr. and Mrs. Stanley did not long retain their good intentions. But as it is the history of their children that I mean to relate, I shall at present pass over the conduct of their parents, and in the next chapter introduce my young heroines more to notice.

CHAPTER II.

"Gay hope is theirs, by fancy fed,
Least pleasing when possess'd;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast."

GRAY.

To execute the generous plan she had undertaken, and not to discontinue her charitable contributions to the poor in her neighborhood, Mrs. Irvin thought it necessary to lay down her carriage, and in everything she could to lessen her expenses; and this she thought no sacrifice, but rather rejoiced that by so doing she would still contribute to the welfare of others.

After staying a fortnight in town, and seeing everything settled to the advantage of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, as far as their present circumstances would allow, she took an affectionate leave of them; and with the two children and Martin, whom she had engaged to continue as their nurse, set off in a hired chaise to her own house.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley parted from their children with less regret than Mrs. Irvin liked to see; but their minds were much more occupied with the voyage they were soon to enter upon. The children felt only pleasure at the thought of their removal, particularly when they knew that Martin was to accompany them. They shed no tears at taking leave of their parents; but when they were

told it would be a great while before they saw them again, their countenances altered, and Ellen ventured to ask, "how long it would be?" She was answered, that "it was uncertain."—"But you won't forget us, mamma!" said she, with artless simplicity: "Anna and I shall remember you, as Martin says we should, every time we say our prayers."

To hide the blush of contrition which spread itself over her face, Mrs. Stanley stooped forward to kiss them with more than usual affection; telling them, "they were very good girls, and that she should often think of them."

The carriage was at the door, and Mr. Stanley saw them lifted into it with the utmost indifference. Their mother stood at the window; and as she kissed her hand to them on their driving off, she felt an emotion quite new to her. When she considered the distance which would in a short time separate her from her children, and the sister she once so dearly loved, she thought she could have wept; but in the hurry and bustle of the house, and the visits of a few friends, who came to discover whether the report of their leaving England was true or not, that they might have it in their power to communicate it to others, the sensibility so new to her was soon worn off, and *self* again became the chief object of her attention.

The children were delighted with their journey; and in expressing the admiration of all they saw, even their fear of strangers was soon forgotten, and they talked without restraint.

"Do tell me the name of the place we are

going to, Martin," said Anna, "for I have forgotten it already."

"Milwood," said Mrs. Irvin: "but I don't know how you will like it; there are no houses to be seen, no carriages, and no people walking about, as there are in London; the country is very dull."

"Oh, I am sure we shall like it," said Ellen, with great eagerness; "for we have seen nothing but houses and carriages, and such things, all our lives. Martin says the country is full of fields and trees; and that we shall see cows, and horses, and sheep, and lambs. Oh, how I wish to be among them!"

Mrs. Irvin smiled at her earnestness. "But," said she, "do you think you will have nothing to do in the country except running about? You know that you are coming to my house to learn a great many things, and you must sit within a great part of every day, and work, and read, and learn lessons."

"Oh, we have been always used to that," replied Ellen, very good-humoredly; "Martin used to make us do so at home: this pocket-handkerchief I hemmed all myself; and Anna can work much better than I can."

"No, sister," interrupted Anna, "indeed I can't; and you know you can read and spell too better than I can."

"I am pleased to see such an affection between these children," said Mrs. Irvin, addressing herself to Martin, who praised them both as very good young ladies; "you have been very attentive to them."

Martin answered very modestly, that, "She thought it her duty to teach them as well as she could; but I know very little myself, ma'am," added she.

"I believe," said Mrs. Irvin, "you know more than many who might have been their more accomplished instructers; for I think you have taught them their duty to God, and to love each other."

"I have endeavored to do so ma'am," answered Martin; "for I thought, if they never learned anything else, a knowledge of their duty would make them feel less hurt at it."

Mrs. Irvin was much pleased with this observation; it seemed above the sentiments of a common servant, and she asked her from whom she had learned them.

"I had the advantage of very religious parents, ma'am," said Martin; "and they always taught me, that to know the way to Heaven was far preferable to all the accomplishments of this life."

Mrs. Irvin perfectly agreed with her, and rejoiced to find she had so worthy an addition to her family.

When they stopped at the inn at which they were to dine, the children thought they were at the end of their journey. "And is this my aunt's house?" said Ellen; "I am glad we are here." Mrs. Irvin explained their mistake, and told them they had still a great way to go after dinner. This meal was the best they had ever tasted; everything was good; and when they were again seated in the chaise, they repeatedly declared that "this was the happiest day of their lives."

Thus they continued to chatter, till toward the evening they began to grow tired, and at length each fell asleep in the arms of their companions: nor did they awake when the carriage stopped at Mrs. Irvin's door. A bed had been prepared for them, and Martin had little else to do than to put them into it. The exercise they had taken that day had been so much more than they had been accustomed to, that not even their curiosity to see their aunt's house could rouse them sufficiently to make any inquiries respecting it.

They slept all night, and it was not till some time after their usual hour that their eyes were opened the next morning; but when Martin had made them sensible that they were indeed at Milwood, she could not dress them quick enough; and though told that breakfast was waiting for them, the prospect from their chamber window so attracted their attention, that they could scarcely be persuaded to leave it. It was the largest and prettiest garden they had ever seen.—"And is it really my aunt's?" asked Anna; "and may we walk in it whenever we like? I am sure there is not such a pretty place all over London. Oh, how happy we shall be!" Again they were told that breakfast was ready, and their aunt waiting. "What!" said Ellen, "will my aunt let us breakfast with her? How good! we never breakfasted with mamma."

Martin, as she conducted them down stairs, was full of her instructions respecting their behavior at the breakfast-table:—"Remember," said she, "what I have told you, and don't eat too

fast, nor spill your tea ; and be very attentive to all your aunt says to you."

They entered the parlor, and found their aunt as kind as ever. She kissed them both, bidding them welcome to Milwood ; but their attention seemed entirely engrossed by Mrs. Irvin's favorite dog, who was endeavoring by every way in his power to show his joy at the return of his mistress ; he walked round and round her chair, wagged his tail, and kept jumping up into her lap.

" What is the matter with the dog ?" said Ellen, half afraid ; " I don't like him, aunt !"

" Don't you ?" replied Mrs. Irvin : " now I do, for he does that to show his gratitude and love for me ; he cannot speak as you and I can, and this is his way of telling me that he is glad to see me. Poor Clio !" added she, patting him on the head, " lie down, my dog ;" and he instantly obeyed her order. " You see," continued she, " there is no reason to be afraid of him ; if you are kind to him, he will soon be as fond of you."

" I don't think I should like, though," returned Ellen, fearfully, " for him to run round me so ; suppose he should bite me ?"

" Oh, that is talking foolishly," said her aunt ; " look, he does not bite me" (putting her hand to his mouth, which he licked with great affection).

" I like the dog better now, aunt," said Ellen, after she had finished her breakfast, and saw him still lying very quietly at his mistress's feet ; and, at her desire, she ventured to stroke him on the back.

Mrs. Irvin then took her nieces into the garden, where they were delighted even beyond their ex-

pectation. They were, like the dog, at a loss how to express their pleasure; they ran upon the grass and jumped for joy.

"Oh, what a sweet place!" said they; "we could not have thought it was half so pretty."—"And what beautiful flowers!" exclaimed Anna, observing the blossoms on the apple and cherry trees; "did you ever see anything like it, sister? flowers to grow upon such large trees!"

"Those," said Mrs. Irvin, enjoying their pleasure, "will all be fruit in a few months; where you see flowers now, there will be apples and cherries; and when they are ripe you shall eat some of them."

"Dear! dear!" said Ellen, "how many there will be! I am so fond of apples," added she, "and in London we hardly ever had one. My dear aunt, how much obliged we are to you!"

Mrs. Irvin then led them to a little summer-house, surrounded by shrubs; where, in the very warm weather, she told them, "they should sit and work with her."

They again expressed their joy; and on their return to the house, ran to tell Martin all the pleasures they were to expect. With their aunt's permission they led Martin likewise round the garden, repeating all the time what she had told them respecting the apples and cherries they were soon to see on the trees which they so much admired.

"My dear Martin," said Anna, as she jumped into her arms, "I am so happy, I don't know what to do with myself; I hope you are so too; but

you don't seem half so much pleased as we are. I am afraid you are sorry to leave London."

"Not at all, my dear," said the affectionate servant; "I am very much pleased to be here; but you must not expect such an old woman as I am to skip about as you do."

When she led them again into the parlor, she feared they would be quite troublesome to their aunt, unused as she had been to children. "The young ladies are like birds let out of a cage, madam," said she: "I am afraid they will make too much noise for you."

Mrs. Irvin very good-humoredly made every allowance for them; and giving them leave to go all over the house, and return to her when they liked, she said, "we must let them recover their senses a little before we think of bringing them into any order; in a very few days their pleasure will be more rational."

"How good my aunt is!" said Ellen, as she went up stairs with Martin; "I am sure we would not do anything to disturb her."

When left to herself, Mrs. Irvin sat down to consider in what way she should best fulfil her promise respecting them; and she determined to have no masters till she had herself instructed them in every branch of their education as far as was in her power. She next examined the account of house-keeping in her absence, and her weekly provisions for the neighboring poor who were old and sick; and was rejoiced to find that, with the retrenchments she had already made, she need not lessen any of these charitable expenses,

to fulfil her benevolent intentions toward her nieces.

The next day, Mrs. Irvin took the little girls to visit the schools which she had established in the village. This was quite a new thing to them, to see so many children all employed, and they told their aunt they should like to work so likewise. Mrs. Irvin answered, that she should expect them to be equally industrious when they began school with her at home: "And now," said she, "I am going to introduce you to an old friend of your mamma's, Mr. Herbert, who knew her when she was a very little girl."

This was the clergyman of the parish, who had been the friend of Mr. Irvin's father, and continued the same regard to his children. He was a very worthy man; and, on being told that the two little girls he now saw were the daughters of his once favorite Ellen, he received them with great affection. At first they were afraid of approaching a stranger; but his kindness insensibly removed their fears, and they soon became very sociable. He asked many questions respecting their mother, which Mrs. Irvin was distressed to answer; for though she was accustomed to speak openly to him, she did not like before the children to express the least disapprobation of their parents' conduct.

On their return, they called at several houses of the poor inhabitants of the village; and the little girls were struck with the appearance of poverty which they exhibited. They had never seen any of their fellow-creatures living in such misery, and it seemed to make a deep impression

on their minds. "What is the reason, aunt," said Ellen, as she walked thoughtfully by her side—"what is the reason that these poor people have hardly any clothes to wear, while some have so many? Let me give some of my frocks to those poor little girls I have seen; I am sure I have a great many more than I want."—"And so have I too," said Anna; "do let us give them away."

"You are very good, my dears," said Mrs. Irvin, "for wishing to relieve these poor people; but at present it is not in your power. Did you not observe what very coarse things they had on? very different from what you wear: and if you were to give them your muslin frocks, they would be of no use to them; some time hence, I hope you will be able to buy what will suit them better. Perhaps, if you wore colored frocks, they might do to give away."

"Oh, let us have some, then," said they, both together; "do, pray, aunt, buy us some, and then we shall have something to give them, and they will thank us, as they did you when you promised to send them some broth."

"And is this your only motive for wishing to have something to give away—that you may be thanked for it?" said Mrs. Irvin; "this is a very poor reason indeed," continued she, "and not what I expected from you. I praised you too soon, I am afraid: your charitable expressions arose more from pride than good-nature." Perceiving them still silent, she continued; "but even then your colored frocks would not be your own, to do as you liked with: if I give you them to wear, it is my money which must buy others in their stead;

and if I buy you clothes to give away, it will be my money, and not yours, which paid for them, and therefore it would be my gift rather than yours; yet not mine either," added she, "for cannot you tell from whom all our good things come?"

"Martin says they come from God," said Ellen.

"Martin is very right," replied Mrs. Irvin: "for they certainly are all sent from Him; and do you know why He sends them to us in such abundance?"

"That we may do good with them, I believe," answered Ellen.

"Very true," returned her aunt: "and therefore you see that it is neither you nor I who are to be thanked for what we give away, but God, who is the first giver of it, and has commanded us to make this use of it. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Ellen, blushing.

"Then you will remember," said Mrs. Irvin, as they entered the garden-gate, "that you have as much reason to be thankful for having it in your power to relieve others, and for the inclination to do so, as they have who receive any benefit through your hands: and it is to God you should direct their thanks, as well as your own. You should also pray to Him, that you may never grow proud of what He enables you to do. And now let me kiss both my dear children, for it is to both I speak; and then you may play in the garden till dinner-time."

CHAPTER III.

"To thee, first Father, ceaseless praise ascend!
And, in the general hymn, my grateful voice
Be duly heard." MILTON.

THE next day was Sunday. Mrs. Irvin always rejoiced at the return of the Sabbath: but she was grieved to hear the children say that they had never been to church, and knew not how to answer all their various questions, so as to impress upon their minds a proper sense of the duty they were to perform there. "You have been used to say your prayers," said she; "and I dare say you have also been taught that, when God made the world, he appointed one day in seven to be kept holy in remembrance of it, and which we should devote to his service; for this purpose we go to church, where we say our prayers with the clergyman, and all the people who meet together; there also we hear the Word of God, and have it explained to us; and those who love God are always very sorry when they cannot attend at his house."

"But who is the clergyman?" asked Ellen, "he will be very angry if we don't mind what he says."

"You saw him yesterday," answered Mrs. Irvin—"Mr. Herbert. But you should remember it is to God you are praying, and it is his Word which Mr. Herbert reads and explains to us; and

therefore it is God we should be fearful of offending: because He not only sees all you do, but also knows everything you think of; and if, while you are kneeling down, and pretending to say your prayers, you are thinking of something else, Mr. Herbert may think you very good girls, while God will be justly displeased with you: for which reason, if you do not promise to behave very attentively, I do not think I can take you: for it would be an offence to God."

"Oh, we will, indeed we will, my dear aunt!" said they both in one voice: "if you will but take us, we will be very good, and remember all you say."

They then went to Martin, impatient to be dressed, telling her that they were going to church. Martin congratulated them on it, and added her strict injunction that they were to be very attentive.

When the bell rang, Mrs. Irvin called her young companions, and taking each by the hand, she led them to the road, where they met the children of the Sunday-school coming from the village. "Are all those little boys and girls going to church too?" said Anna; "and these men and women that are coming the other way? Dear! dear! how many people we shall see!"

"You will not forget," said Mrs. Irvin, "that God is greater than all these people, and that it is of Him we must think: you are not going to church to look about you, but to learn your duty."

She spoke rather gravely, as she wished to impress them with a serious sense of the service they were going to perform; and it had the de-

sired effect: for when they entered the church, the little girls forbore to notice aloud anything they saw; and though all was so new to them, they entered the seat, and sat quietly till the service began, when they were very attentive, and joined in every prayer they knew. All the time of the sermon they kept their eye on Mr. Herbert, and afterward repeated to their aunt some things he said, calculated to strike their minds.

"I like going to church very much," said Ellen, "and hope I shall soon read well enough to carry a book, as you do, aunt; then I shall know better what Mr. Herbert is saying."

"I am very glad to hear you say so, my dear child," replied Mrs. Irvin; "for it is certainly a very great privilege to be allowed to join in prayer with the best of God's servants, and a still greater one to speak to God himself. When you consider," added she, "how many poor creatures there are in the world who know not the God who made them—and some in this Christian land, as it is called, may, I am afraid, be found—you ought to be doubly thankful that you are so early taught the blessings you enjoy, and to pray for them, that they also may know them."

Before their dinner-hour they visited the Sunday-school with their aunt, and heard some of the girls read, and repeat the Catechism. Here also they saw Mr. Herbert, who constantly attended both the boys' and girls' school every Sunday. He commended the children for their good behavior at church, and as he walked home with Mrs. Irvin, it gave her pleasure to observe the attention which both her nieces paid to what he

said on having seen them at church, and what ought to be their sentiments on going there for the first time. In the afternoon they all met at church again; and when they came home, Mrs. Irvin read to them such a part of the New Testament as she thought most likely to interest them, and explained the instructions it contained. She afterward gave them Dr. Watts's first Catechism for Children, which they were to learn so as to answer the questions the next Sunday. After tea, they went for a walk; during which she repeated to them two or three hymns of that excellent author, so deservedly a favorite with all children; and with these they were so delighted, that they begged they might also learn them; and while Martin was putting them to bed that evening, they were full of the goodness of their aunt, and telling her what she had promised to teach them.

The next morning, Mrs. Irvin began upon the plan she had formed for their education. She told them that, at their age, most children in their station knew a great deal more than they did, and therefore it was necessary for them to exert all their diligence to learn whatever she desired. In the first place, she expected them to rise at seven every morning, (an hour earlier than they had been accustomed to,) and be at their lessons before eight, which were such as they could very easily learn in half an hour: when they were perfect in them, they were to come to breakfast; after which, they might play in the garden, or walk with Martin, with whom she often sent them on some charitable errand to the poor in the vil-

lage, till ten o'clock; at which time they were to return to her, and repeat the lessons they had learned before breakfast, and to employ the rest of the morning in reading, writing, and working, according to her direction. Mrs. Irvin was very fond of music, and was herself a proficient in it, and some part of every day she employed in teaching them the notes. She also read to them, and accustomed them to answer the questions which arose from what they heard.

Before they left their aunt, to be dressed for dinner, they a second time repeated their lessons, which were short and adapted to their capacities; and by this method these first instructions were imprinted on their memories. Neither did Mrs. Irvin forget the more important lessons of religion, while teaching them things belonging to this world only. The Catechisms she had given them were daily repeated; and when perfect in them, she put into their hands the excellent one of our church. With so strict an attention, in a very little time they began to know something of the different things in which it was necessary that they should be instructed. In the familiar lessons of Mrs. Trimmer and Mrs. Barbauld, those good friends of youth, was given them a general idea of the works of God; and, with the kind attention of their excellent instructress, who improved every advantage which books could afford, their minds expanded, and they found the pleasure there is in receiving instruction.

Great was the happiness of Mrs. Irvin, while these dear children seemed to answer all her love, and while her most pleasing expectations

concerning them were not disappointed. They were every day more endeared to their aunt; nor were they less attached to her, who thus early taught them to look with prayer to the Almighty for assistance in all their endeavors; and in everything they learned, they were also taught to ascribe to Him the praise, who had thus blessed their endeavors to become wise and good.

In this way the children went on for several months, improving every day; when, as they were one morning returning from their walk into the village, whither their aunt had sent them with Martin to distribute some of her usual benefactions, they passed by a neat cottage, with whose inhabitant they were not so well acquainted as with many others, though they had often admired the flowers which grew in the little garden before it, and had heard their aunt say she was a very good old woman who lived in it. As they knew she had no children, they were now surprised to see a little girl sitting near the door, and talking to another who was gathering flowers at a little distance.

"How sweet the garden smells!" said she; "I am sure there must be a great many flowers in it, and I wish I could see them! O Betsy, I am so glad to be here, you can't think: will you lead me down to the lilach-tree? I should like to sit there, as I did yesterday."

"To be sure I will," answered the other; and running to her, she took her by the hand, and, at the same time carrying the chair on which she

sat, she led her down the path to the side of the road.

"Who can these little girls be?" said Ellen; "I never saw them before."

"Hush!" said Martin: "I am afraid that poor child is blind; if so, how much I pity her!"

As they were concealed in the hedge behind which they stood, the children did not observe them, but continued their conversation:—"You will not mind being left alone for a little while?" said Betsy, very affectionately, to her sister; "for you know I must go in and help mother; but perhaps Dame Hunt will come to you; shall I ask her?"

"No, no," said the little girl; "I dare say she is busy about something or another; I only am idle. Oh, how I wish I could do something!" added she with a sigh; "but I cannot see."

"Poor thing!" said Ellen, in a low voice; "she is blind then: what can we do for her? Let us speak to her" (drawing nearer to the place where she sat); but Martin, who had more thought, whispered to them, "that, as she was now alone, it might frighten her to be addressed by strangers:" and they gave up the idea. "But we will tell my aunt," said Anna; "I am sure she will come and see her."

At this moment the church clock struck ten, and they hurried home to be in time for their lessons. They were eager also to communicate to their aunt what they had seen; nor could the business of the morning be attended to, till she had promised to go to the cottage in the afternoon, and take them with her.

The moment they had dined they were impatient to set out on their expedition, but were prevented by the rain. Poor Ellen could not help complaining very bitterly of the weather :—"Is it not too bad?" said she; "I should not have minded it, if we had been only going for a walk; but for the sake of the poor little girl I wanted to go; is it not hard, aunt," continued she, "that we are prevented? for, I am sure you would have given her something; and now she will not have it."

"You forget," said Mrs. Irvin, very coolly, "that it may not rain to-morrow; and that what I have to give her will be quite as acceptable then as now: besides, as she does not know of our intention, it can be no disappointment to her."

Still Ellen could not help repeatedly wishing it would not rain; and when her aunt asked her to read, as they could not get out, it was with great unwillingness she obeyed. Her sister invited her to come and play with her; but she continued to sit in the window, lamenting the weather, till Mrs. Irvin again spoke to her.

"I cannot help it," said Ellen; "I wish it would not rain."

"You behave very ill," replied Mrs. Irvin; "do you not know who sends the rain, and for what purpose? It will be of much greater benefit than our visit to the cottage. Perhaps you may imagine that you are showing great good-nature to the little girl you wish to see; but remember it is still more your duty to submit to the will of God in everything, and that, even in such a trifle as this appears to be, He is as attentive to your conduct as in more material trials."

Ellen did not feel what was said, but went out of the room to seek her sister, who again pressed her to come and play :—"Never mind the weather," said she; "you know we may go to-morrow."

But without attending to her advice, Ellen continued her murmurs. "I do not see my aunt has any reason to be angry with me," said she; "I am sure it is not for myself I wished to go: there is not so much pleasure in going to the cottage, as in walking any other way; it must be for the sake of the little girl."

"But why should you be sorry, if we cannot go?" asked Anna: "my aunt will take us to-morrow."

With this thought, Ellen began in some measure to recover her good humor; yet, before the conclusion of the evening, she met with another trial of her patience, which, as her mind was so ill prepared for it, she bore still worse than the present. Martin had promised to make her doll a new bonnet, and on this day it was to have been finished; but the idea of visiting the cottage had so occupied Ellen's mind all the day, that it had not once entered her head, till now, being persuaded by her sister to join her in play, when she came to dress her doll, she recollected the bonnet was wanting, and ran with eagerness to inquire of Martin if it was made. Unfortunately, she found her quite differently employed; instead of working for her doll, she was busily engaged in making some clothes for a poor child in the village.

"I hope you will not be angry with me, Miss,"

said she, "but indeed I have not had time even to begin it; for when I promised you should have it to-day, I did not know I should have this shirt and frock to make; your aunt gave them to me the other day, and the poor boy has nothing to wear till they are done."

"Well, I declare, I never knew anything like it!" said Ellen; "I can't have anything I wish to-day: I am sure it would not have taken up much of your time to have made my doll's bonnet! you know you promised it me, and I must say I think it very hard."

"Oh! Miss Ellen, don't say so," replied Martin; "I am sure you cannot think it of as much consequence as clothes for this poor boy: I will make it as soon as ever I have finished for him."

"But I want it now," said Ellen, violently angry; "and you ought to have made it; and I know very well you never will—you never intend to do it; you will always have some excuse or other."

In this way she was talking, when she heard her aunt's voice behind her:—"What is the matter?" said Mrs. Irvin, observing Ellen's angry countenance: "you were speaking in a very improper tone, and I see by your looks you have behaved ill."

Ellen was silent, and ashamed of being seen by her aunt in so ill a humor: she was going out of the room, but Mrs. Irvin commanded her to stay, and again asked Martin to explain the cause of her behavior. At first she did not like to speak; but upon Mrs. Irvin's insisting on knowing, she owned that Miss Ellen had been very

angry with her, because she had not made her doll a bonnet at the time appointed, instead of finishing the clothes for the poor boy, who so much wanted them.

Ellen held down her head; when her aunt expressed great sorrow on hearing this account; and taking her niece by the hand, she led her to the parlor, where in the most affectionate manner she endeavored to convince her of the impropriety of her conduct. "My dear child," said she, "you can no longer imagine that your impatience to visit the cottage this afternoon proceeded from good-nature or benevolence; it was because your curiosity was raised, and you wished to know who were the little girls you had seen there: but if it had proceeded from a charitable wish, is it not evident that, so far from being angry with Martin for not having made a bonnet for your doll, you would have been pleased she had not spent her time upon such a trifle, when she was so much better employed! Every day that this poor boy has to wait for his clothes, he cannot go to school, neither can he go out to work; so that you see it is not like our visit to the cottage, a matter of indifference whether it is one day sooner or later; and yet you could have wished him to have waited still longer, that you might have had a trifling plaything. Are you not sorry for this?" added she, observing the tears stealing down the face of the softened Ellen.

"Yes, indeed I am," said Ellen, as well as her sobs would allow her to speak; "I am indeed; I will never be so cross again. But are not you displeased with me, my dear aunt?" added

she, greatly distressed; "what shall I do if you are? I never offended you before; but I know I deserve your anger."

"No, my dear," said Mrs. Irvin, tenderly embracing her; "if you are sorry for your fault, I can no longer be angry with you: you did not see things in this light before; but let what I have now said convince you of the necessity there is of always examining the motives from which we act. You are but young at present, and may not always understand what I mean; but as you grow older, you are likely to be often deceived in this manner; while you think you are showing a very good disposition, it is only some vain or trifling passion you wish to gratify: as, in the instance of this afternoon, you may be sure it was only curiosity that influenced you, or you would not have been so angry when a work of charity interfered with your pleasure."

Ellen readily acknowledged her mistake; and the tenderness of her aunt was so clearly seen in the mildness of her reproofs, that by this manner she gained more ascendency over the minds of her nieces than if she had severely punished them for every fault. It was indeed by the cords of affection that she bound them to herself: and by thus reasoning with them on their general conduct, she laid the foundation of their future happiness, by teaching them to bring all their actions to this unerring test: whether the motive, as well as the action itself, was such as would be approved by God.

CHAPTER IV.

" When heaven-born Charity
Expands the heart, and prompts the liberal hand
To sooth distress." BOWDLER.

THE next morning Mrs. Irvin proposed going into the village, and calling at Dame Hunt's in her way home. Ellen felt conscious of not deserving to go with her; but her fears were soon removed by her aunt's telling her, as well as her sister, to get ready to accompany her.

After they had visited the school, and called on two or three old and sick people, they went to the cottage, where, instead of the children they had seen the day before, a woman of very decent appearance, but looking very ill, was walking in the garden; and as they approached the house, she opened the gate that led to it. Mrs. Irvin asked if Dame Hunt was within, and was followed by the stranger up the walk, who appeared to have scarcely strength to answer her questions.

" I am afraid you are not well," said Mrs. Irvin, very kindly: " have you been long ill ?"

" Some time, ma'am," answered she—" trouble has brought me to this ill state of health."

At this moment the old woman came to the door, and without regarding the company, she cried out, " Oh, Mrs. Forbes, make haste and come in; I do believe your child is almost dead !"

" What do you mean ?" said the poor woman,

exerting all her strength to reach the house : " not my poor Mary, I hope ?"

" No, my dear mother," cried a voice from within ; " pray don't be frightened ; indeed I am not much hurt."

Mrs. Irvin was now within the door, where she saw the poor little girl her nieces had mentioned, lying on the floor, with her face and neck covered with blood.

" Oh, what is the matter ?" said the affrighted mother ; " how did this happen ? my dear Mary, what shall I do for you ?" and weakened by illness and alarm, she burst into tears.

Mrs. Irvin hardly knew which to assist first ; but with her usual composure, she desired the old woman to get some water for Mrs. Forbes, while she raised the poor child from the ground ; who, on hearing her mother's sobs, was still more distressed, and attempting to move, she said, " My dear mother, where are you ? I am not hurt, indeed I am not ; pray don't cry so ;—let me come to you," added she, stretching out her arms ; " where are you ? and who is here beside you ?"

" Here are none but friends," said Mrs. Irvin, kindly taking her hand and leading her toward her mother ; " your mother is only frightened ; but you must set her a better example ; and when we have washed your face, and put something over this slight wound in your forehead, you will be quite well again."

The poor woman now began to recover herself, and rose to help her child. " How good you are, ma'am !" said she ; " I am sure you take too much trouble about us : but indeed I was so frightened

at first, that even now I am fit for nothing; my dear child, I can do nothing for you:" and on observing the deep cut in her forehead, she again burst into tears. "You are needlessly alarmed," said Mrs. Irvin, as she wiped the little girl's face; "it is but a very small wound; but Dame Hunt was very unguarded to alarm you as she did."

"Why, my dear heart alive, ma'am," said the old woman, "if you had but seen the poor child; she did not say a word, but there she lay all as if she was dead, and the blood gushing out so! I only went up stairs to fetch something I wanted, and she was sitting very quietly, and out of the way of everything; but when I came back, there was she lying upon the floor, all over blood, and the two iron candlesticks upon her."

"How came you there, my dear?" said Mrs. Irvin; "you should not have moved without anybody in the room."

"My sister Betsy is gone out, ma'am," answered the little girl; "and I thought that I would try and cut some paper, for I very often employ myself in that manner; and as I knew mother was in the garden, and Betsy had told me that the scissors and paper were upon the shelf, I thought I would get up and feel along it till I found what I wanted; but I did not know that the candlesticks were there, and I believe I pushed them down, and that frightened me so that I fell down myself, and they cut my face a little. When Dame Hunt came in, I could not speak directly; but I little thought she would call my dear mother, and frighten her."

'I am much better now, my dear," said Mrs.

Forbes, advancing to her, and wishing to take the trouble from Mrs. Irvin, who was still washing the forehead of the child. Ellen and Anna had stood all the time in silent affright, not knowing what to do; but still they wished to assist the poor little girl; and when she was again seated, they each went, and taking her hand, inquired how she felt herself.

"These are two little girls that came with me," said Mrs. Irvin; "they wished to help you if they could."

The little stranger seemed much pleased with their attention, and answered all their inquiries with great civility. Mrs. Irvin now asked how long they had been in the neighborhood, and what had brought them there? And from Mrs. Forbes's account she learned that she had experienced great troubles, particularly after the death of her husband, who died just as he had entered on a very good business at Rochester, in which his own endeavors and the kindness of his friends seemed to promise him success, till his ill state of health damped all their comforts. They had married very young; and their parents dying soon after, they were much distressed, till, by the advice of their friends, they took to the business above mentioned. Soon after they were married, they had these two children, the youngest of whom had been blind from two years old. When her husband died, Mrs. Forbes thought it too great an undertaking to continue the business, particularly as she feared her own health began to decline; and therefore, as soon as she could, she disposed of the stock, of which, as they had begun trade

in confined circumstances, the first expenses were not entirely paid off; and when all came to be settled, she found she had little else to depend on for the support of herself and children but her own industry. She then commenced mantua-making, and took in plain work; but with her utmost exertions she found it very difficult to gain a livelihood. One poor child could do nothing to assist her, and nearly all the time of the other was occupied in attending on her sister. In addition to all this, the poor widow found her health daily declining; her work failed her, and she was often in want of absolute necessaries, till at length a charitable friend offered to pay for having medical advice: her complaint was declared consumptive, and nothing but a change of air was likely to remove it. She was much alarmed on hearing this; and the dread of leaving her children so young and helpless, made here extremely anxious to follow this advice. The same kind friend who at first procured the attendance of a physician for her, now offered to do all in her power to assist her in the expenses of her removal; and as Dame Hunt was a relation of her husband whom she had often visited in his lifetime, she thought of coming to her cottage, where, she flattered herself, she should soon regain her health, and be able to do something which should prevent her being burdensome to the poor old woman; and she immediately wrote her a letter, describing her situation, and begging to be admitted into her house for a short time. On receiving this letter, no selfish idea entered the mind of Dame Hunt; such as, it was likely this poor woman would die,

and then the children would be left to her care: she had studied her Bible, and there she learned, that, "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord;" and that, "whatsoever he doeth, it shall be recompensed upon him."

"These people are poorer than I," said she to herself; "and surely it is my duty to help them all I can." She therefore sent for the schoolmaster to come and write her a letter, that she might send to Mrs. Forbes, "and tell her to come as soon as ever she liked." Though blunt in her manners, Dame Hunt had a feeling heart; and when she saw the miserable appearance of this dejected family, still more so from a long and fatiguing journey, with little or no accommodation on the road, she could not refrain from tears. They stopped at the door of the cottage about seven o'clock in the evening, in a little cart which had been hired by the friend already spoken of to convey them thither; and when she saw their helpless appearance, she exclaimed with pity, "Poor creatures, how ill they look! come in, and welcome;—sure, sure, I never thought to see you so! but 'the Lord taketh up, and casteth down.' How well I remember when Tom Forbes, as we used to call him, came down here the last time! why, he looked like a gentleman; but now he is gone, and my poor old Gaffer is dead also. But do not fear, my good woman," added she, observing Mrs. Forbes shed tears at the mention of her husband; "all is for the best; and, upon my word, I be glad to see you; and, as I told you in my letter, you shall be welcome to stay as long as you like. I have got victuals enow for you

and myself too, God be thanked for it!" Such was the reception this good old woman gave her distressed kinswoman; and on hearing the recital of their misfortunes, which Mrs. Forbes now gave to Mrs. Irvin, she renewed her promises of assistance as far as she was able, and again repeated her hearty declarations of welcome.

Mrs. Irvin soon after took her leave, and putting half a crown into Mrs. Forbes's hand, promised to call again very soon. As they walked home, she was anxious to consider in what way she could be most serviceable to this family; and first, the poor woman herself seemed most to want her assistance, whose health, she hoped, by strengthening food and good nursing, might be recovered. Ellen and Anna could think or talk of nothing else. "Oh, how bad it must be to be blind!" said Anna; "what should we do, sister, if either of us were so?"

"I cannot think," answered Ellen: "and then the poor woman so ill too!—I did not like Dame Hunt at first, for calling out and frightening her so; but afterward I did,—she seems such a good old woman."

"Indeed she is," replied Mrs. Irvin; "I wish we had all the same dispositions. To be sure, she wanted discretion in saying so abruptly that the child was dead, and alarming the poor mother: but perhaps there are some who would think she showed a greater want of it, when she took three people into her house in the circumstances these are in; but I like her much the better for it, and shall always respect her for such hearty benevolence! for though she talks of what she has as

being enough for all, I know it is not what many people, even in her situation, would think sufficient for one person to live comfortably on. Do you not now see," continued Mrs. Irvin, addressing Ellen, "that our going this morning is much better than last night? for now we are able to assist the little girls in more ways than by giving them money; and in all probability the poor woman would have been still more frightened, if she had not so soon been assured that there was no reason for Dame Hunt's alarm."

Ellen acknowledged the truth of her observation, and again asked pardon for her impatience.

"I have entirely forgotten that," said her good aunt, "and I only mention it that you may learn from this instance that we are very improper judges of what we call fortunate or unfortunate, in such unavoidable circumstances; and even the future life of the poor woman whom we have seen to-day may prove the truth of what I say: her misfortunes may, in the end, produce good to her."

It was in this manner Mrs. Irvin made every incident productive of instruction to her nieces; and they were soon taught to consider even the most trifling events as under the direction of Providence, and that it is according to our conduct under them whether they may be styled good or evil.

Not all the attention of Mrs. Irvin could restore health to the poor invalid; but by frequently conversing with her, she taught her to resign herself and children to the will of God, and from

the assurances of Scripture, to feel a comfortable hope that those who trust in the Almighty shall never be forsaken.

As it seemed to be the wish of the anxious mother, Mrs. Irvin promised that the eldest girl should be admitted into her school in the village, the next vacancy; and also told her that every endeavor should be used to gain admission for the second into a school in London for blind children, where she would be instructed to do something toward her own support. Dame Hunt declared that, while she lived, they neither of them would want a home; "And never you fear," said the good old woman, "but what God will raise up friends for your children a deal better than I am, should it please him to take me out of this world: 'He is the father of the fatherless.'"

Mrs. Forbes felt as a mother at the thoughts of parting from her children; but she blessed God for having brought her to this place, and giving her an opportunity of seeing the instruments by which He would graciously provide for them:—"Had I died at Rochester," said she, "what uncertainty should I have left them in! And for myself, also, I have reason to be truly thankful: by these good friends I am instructed in the way of everlasting life; and I need not now fear to die, since the door of heaven is opened unto me by a merciful Savior."

Not many days after this, the poor woman died, having spent nearly six months at Milwood, and experienced great kindness both from Mrs. Irvin and Mr. Herbert, who frequently visited her, and from whom she had the satisfaction of

hearing that her unfortunate child would be admitted into the school above mentioned, and that Mrs. Irvin had determined to send her up to town with Martin, with whom she was now well acquainted, having spent a great deal of time with her during her mother's illness.

This poor little girl would often say, "I wish I could help my dear mother: I wish I could see her; but I shall in heaven: there we shall never be parted, and I shall open my eyes, and see much better things than are to be seen in this world!"

On hearing of her mother's death, she for a while seemed much affected; but on Martin's endeavoring to give her comfort, by reminding her of the superior happiness she was now enjoying, she exclaimed, "Oh, I will pray to God to make me a good girl, that I may go to that delightful place where my dear mother is gone. If I am good, I may go there—may not I?" asked she with earnestness.

"Yes, my dear," returned Martin: "the same Savior who died for the pardon of her sins, died also for yours; and for his sake God will receive you into heaven, as well as all who trust in him."

When the time came for her admittance into the school above mentioned, Mary Forbes was between ten and eleven, and her sister thirteen: they had never been separated before, and it was now a great grief to them; but as Mrs. Irvin thought it right, they both endeavored to conceal their regret: yet, when the day came, Mary had need of all her fortitude to bear the parting: what

she had lately heard had taught her the necessity of resignation to support the evils of this life, and she earnestly prayed that in this trial she might possess it. "Do not cry, my dear Betsy," said she; "I shall do all in my power to learn whatever is taught me as quick as ever I can; and then I shall come home and be able to do something for you, and to help Dame Hunt, who has been so good to us: you know God is always with us, and I hope He will assist my endeavors."

Betsy could scarcely speak for tears; but she tried to imitate her sister, and in the most earnest expressions she begged her not to forget her, or anything that had been said to her since she came to Milwood; they parted several times, and still returned to kiss each other again, till poor Ellen and Anna could not help expressing a wish that their aunt would let them both stay there: "We can work for Mary," said they; "and Martin can teach her a great many things." But Mrs. Irvin soon convinced them of the impropriety of their request: "You know," said she, "that it is but for a short time she is going; and would you wish to deprive her of the only opportunity she has of ever learning to support herself? Think how much worse it would be were we to die before her, and she to be left destitute; she would have reason to blame us for this false feeling."

This reasoning seemed equally to affect all who heard it; and Mary, loosening her hand from her sister's, as she gave it a last affectionate kiss, turning to Martin, said with great firmness, "I am ready to go, and I ought to be happy to go; the coach will wait for us:" for they were to walk a

few miles to meet the London stage, in which places had been taken for them from the neighboring town. "Good-by, my dear sister; God bless you all—all!" said she, as she hurried along the passage; and when out of the house, she repeated her prayer, that God would bless all whom she had left in it; "And I thank Him," said she, emphatically, "for all their kindness to me and mine!"

Martin was to stay in town that week, or perhaps longer, with some friends whom she wished to see there; so that before her return Mary would be settled and acquainted with the school, and she hoped to be able to send such an account of her situation as would make her sister comfortable. She was also to be introduced to some acquaintance of Mrs. Irvin's, who promised her often to go and see her there. On being frequently reminded of this, Betsy grew more reconciled to their separation: and when Martin returned, and related the kindness with which she had been received by Mrs. Irvin's friends, she rejoiced that her wishes respecting her sister had not been complied with; she went constantly to school, and though older than many of the children, was not ashamed to begin with the least; and, by a strict attention, she soon made great improvement. Dame Hunt was very fond of her, and as she grew more infirm, declared that "she should not know what to do without her;" while, by every way in her power, Betsy endeavored to show her gratitude to this her first friend, who had behaved with such kindness to herself and sister when they were poor and helpless strangers.

Nothing more material happened to our young heroines during the first four or five years of their stay with Mrs. Irvin; they passed their time in a uniform course of improvement; and when their kind instructress had herself thoroughly grounded them in the various branches of their education, she spared no expense to procure them the best masters the country afforded: nor were they taught the accomplishments their rank in life seemed to require with the idea that they were to make a figure in the world, but that, in whatever circumstances they might in future be placed, they should be capable of adding either to the improvement or amusement of others. With all this, the strictest attention was paid to their religious improvement, the superior importance of which they were taught, both by the precept and example of their aunt. Nothing was allowed to interfere with their duty to God; on the contrary, their various employments were often interrupted by works of piety and charity. "These," said Mrs. Irvin, "will fit you for more lasting enjoyment! they are necessary to a happy eternity, and are certainly more worthy our attention than those fleeting accomplishments which can be of service to you only in this life, and probably but for a small portion of it; for a thousand things may prevent your improvement of them; while good works will remain hereafter, and your reward will be, though not for them, yet in proportion to them."

Mrs. Stanley wrote once or twice to her sister during this period, expressing herself much obliged by her attention to her children, and

pleased with the account she heard of their improvement, but with great coolness toward themselves. She gave a long account of the splendor of the East; the *balls* and *entertainments* she was continually engaged in: but as to the time of their return, she said she could not get Mr. Stanley to fix any; but whenever they revisited England, she hoped it would be in a style far superior to any of their former acquaintance.

After two years' absence from her friends, Mary Forbes returned to them, much benefited by the charitable instructions she had received; she was now enabled to do many things which before she was incapable of, and, when fully employed, could earn several shillings a week. How often did she thank Mrs. Irvin for putting her in the way of learning to provide for herself, and bless the Institution which was thus alleviating the misfortune of other poor children! Betsy was delighted to see her; and after her return went no more to school, but devoted her whole time to the care of her sister, and of Dame Hunt, who was now very much enfeebled. Ellen and Anna used frequently to visit them, and while Betsy was otherwise engaged, would read to the old woman and Mary such books as reconciled them to their lots in this life, and encouraged them, through the merits of a Redeemer, to look for a glorious inheritance hereafter. Nor were their attentions confined to this family alone; every poor person in the parish had reason to bless God for them, and was daily offering up prayers to Him for their happiness and long continuance among them.

CHAPTER V.

"The spring-time of our years
Is soon dishonor'd, and defiled in most
By budding ills that ask a prudent hand
To check them." COWPER.

MRS. IRVIN observed that though, from being constantly in her society, the impatience and irritability of Ellen's temper were much suppressed, they were far from being subdued; and now that she had for so long a time given her nieces an opportunity of observing the advantages resulting from the plan of education she had pursued, she was desirous they should also see the difference of the more general mode; and that, from their own experience, they should form their judgment of each.

For this reason she proposed sending an invitation to the daughters of some former friends of their parents, a Mr. and Mrs. Arnold; with whom Mrs. Stanley had been staying at the time of her marriage. Mrs. Arnold had also, in her younger days, been intimate with Mrs. Irvin; and though it was seldom they had met since that time, an appearance of friendship was still kept up between them.

Though Mrs. Arnold was gay and dissipated, she thought it necessary to give her children what is called a good education; and the two eldest, at the time Ellen and Anna came to their aunt's,

had been to a very capital school nearly a twelvemonth. It was these young ladies Mrs. Irvin wished to introduce to her nieces, particularly as the parents of each were connected, Mr. Stanley being a distant relation of Mrs. Arnold; and the letters which Mrs. Irvin now and then received from her abounded with solicitous inquiries respecting the children of her friend.

Ellen and Anna were too happy in the society of each other, and found too many ways of occupying their time, to wish much for the company of others: yet the thought of becoming acquainted with some young people in the same rank of life as themselves pleased them in idea, and they were anxious to hear if the invitation their aunt had sent would be accepted; but no sooner did the letter arrive, which brought the thanks of Mrs. Arnold, and her promise, that, as the midsummer holydays were approaching, her daughters should, immediately on their commencement, visit Mrs. Irvin, than they felt more uneasiness than pleasure in the expectation of their arrival.—"What shall we do?" said Anna; "how are we to entertain them? they are both older than we are; and my aunt says they have been to school for so many years, that I dare say they know a great deal more than we do."

"I don't know that," said Ellen; "for I have heard Mr. Herbert say, that it is not at schools young folks learn the most: for my part, I am determined not to be afraid of them: I shall say, that I know both music and drawing very well."

"Stop, my dear," said Mrs. Irvin, interrupting her: "let not a wish to exalt yourself in their

opinion put you upon telling untruths; it is not likely that you should either play or draw so well as these young ladies, who have had the best masters for so long a time; assure yourself that they will soon discover what you can as well as what you cannot do: children more ignorant than yourselves have hitherto been your companions; and there is nothing unpleasant in the idea, since you have endeavored, as far as you are capable, to improve them; but now you are to be introduced into very different society, yet remember, that 'high and low, rich and poor, are all alike in the sight of God;' and let not their opinion, which in this respect may be very opposite to yours, make you act otherwise than you have done. Though your manners may not be so fashionable as theirs, be uniformly good-natured, and let us show them the politeness of a Christian, rather than that of the gay world."

In less than a fortnight, the young visiters arrived, in their father's chariot, attended by a footman on horseback. Ellen and Anna, when they saw the carriage approach, looked at each other with apprehension; they knew not whether to run to the door to welcome their guests, or fly up stairs to hide themselves.

"When Mary Forbes came home," said Anna, "we were not at a loss how to receive her; we were glad to see her."

"So you will be to see these young ladies, I hope," said their aunt: "come with me, and meet them in the hall."

"Yes, we will," said Ellen, resuming her boast-

ed courage; "what have we to be afraid of?—the manners of the outside are of very little consequence."

As she spoke this the Miss Arnolds entered the house. They were genteel-looking girls, and without that forwardness of manners too often seen in those young ones of the present age, who, by being introduced so early into the world, lose the simplicity and engaging diffidence of youth, which once was looked upon as the presage of advancing worth.

Mrs. Irvin received them with affection, as she considered they were the children of her earliest friend; and she introduced them to her nieces, by whom they were conducted to the parlor, where she again expressed herself happy to see them: and Ellen and Anna, by every attention in their power, endeavored to lessen the awkwardness which they could not help suspecting even ladies so used to the world must feel, on being introduced to entire strangers.

The usual civilities passed between them; and it was not long before all parties seemed acquainted with each other. The evening was far advanced, and the Miss Arnolds having been so long a journey that day, made it an excuse for retiring early to rest.

The sisters rose the next morning at their usual time; but though they allowed a later hour to their visiters, they were surprised to find they far exceeded it. Mrs. Irvin thought it necessary to wait breakfast for them; and Ellen and Anna had read and repeated most of their lessons, before the Miss Arnolds appeared.

After breakfast their aunt thought it best to leave them entirely alone ; and with a look of encouragement to her nieces, who fearfully saw her depart, she left the room. Ellen then asked Miss Arnold, if she would favor them by sitting down to the piano ?—This request was readily complied with ; and the eldest Miss Arnold played a very difficult piece with great execution. Her sister next took her seat ; and afterward Ellen and Anna : the former had very early shown a taste for music ; and her visiter was surprised, if not a little mortified, to find her performance far surpassed the idea she had formed of what could be learned from a country master.

Charlotte (which was the name of the second Miss Arnold) paid little attention to Ellen's playing, but seemed more anxious to enter into conversation with Anna, in whom she thought she had discovered a strong likeness to one of her school-fellows :—" How old are you ?" inquired she ; " for I declare you are just like Miss B**, and exactly her size also ; are you younger than your sister ?" continued she.

" We are between fourteen and fifteen," answered Anna : " do not you know that my sister and myself are of the same age ?"

" You are twins, then ?" replied Charlotte ; " I had forgotten it ; how pleasant that must be, for you must know I hate an elder sister vastly ! in general they are so commanding ; but I suppose you love each other better than other sisters ?"

Anna smiled.—" I don't know," said she ; " we shall see, perhaps, while you are here ; at pres-

ent, we have not known any sisters who do not love each other."

"Ah, you allude to what I have said," replied her companion; "but, to tell you the truth, you may expect to see my sister and me quarrel ten times a day;—at least, if you were at school with us I am sure you would; for there, being the eldest, she has some little authority over me, and I assure you she exercises it very severely."

Anna knew not what answer to make, and endeavored to change the conversation by asking the age of her new acquaintance.

"I am almost fifteen," returned Charlotte; "and my sister is more than sixteen: I hope, therefore, she will soon leave school: then, Augusta, one younger than myself, will come; and it will be my turn to have power over her, and I shall make her know what I have felt under Harriet."

Anna was quite startled. "Surely," said she, "that will be very cruel! I should think, if I had experienced want of kindness in my sister, I should be more anxious to show it to another."

"Oh, no, you would not," replied the unfeeling girl: "if you were at school, you would soon learn a different opinion: it is very pretty to talk as you do, and we often meet with such fine sentiments in our lessons; but no one thinks of putting them in practice."

During this conversation, the other ladies had gone up stairs; and Charlotte proposed following them. Anna attended her in silence.

"Is this what is learned at boarding-schools?" thought she; "then we have nothing to regret;—

if we had been there, perhaps I should have hated my sister."

Ellen and Anna smiled on each other as they observed the various ornaments their visiters had brought; while they evidently enjoyed the surprise expressed by them, on seeing so many things which to them appeared useless and unnecessary.

"Look at this muslin frock," said Miss Arnold: "it is what I wore at our last public day, and quite a fashionable make; for the mantua-maker assured me she had made but one before, and that was for Lady Charlotte A***. I wore this wreath of roses round my head;—don't you think them pretty?"

"Very pretty," answered Ellen; "but I am sorry you brought them here, as I fear you will not have an opportunity of wearing them; and their being so closely packed seems to have injured them already."

"Oh, that is of no consequence," replied the other; "I should not take them to school the next half year; the ladies would think it very odd to see the same things come back again: I knew this was a very retired situation, and therefore brought them, as I thought they would be new here."

"Quite new, indeed!" answered Ellen, with a smile; "such a dress as this would excite the astonishment of all the people in the village; I really wish you had not brought things half so smart."

"My dear child," said Harriet, "would you not have us dress according to our rank in life?

Our situation demands it of us; and to regard our appearance is what our governess always inculcates."

"You must excuse my ignorance," said Ellen, with unconcern; "I did not know that dress was so absolutely necessary to denote our rank or situation in life; but I am sure it is not so here; for every one respects my good aunt, though I never saw her but in the plainest dress."

"Your aunt," returned Harriet, "is out of the world; but we are just entered into it. I hope she does not mean to regulate your apparel by her own. When you come to London, (as, when Mr. and Mrs. Stanley return from abroad, I suppose you will,) I assure you, you will find many things necessary in regard to dress, of which at present you have no idea; and your *good* aunt, in her plain suit, would have little regard paid to her in the large circle of the fashionable world."

"It must be a very strange world," answered Ellen, rather indignantly, while the color rose in her cheeks at hearing her aunt so spoken of, "that would not regard and respect her also; and I should not wish to belong to it."

Mrs. Irvin now very opportunely entered the room, and put an end to their conversation.

When the business of unpacking was over, they returned to the parlor; and thinking it too warm to walk, Mrs. Irvin begged to hear Miss Arnold sing the last new song: and thus, with the help of the piano, the time passed away till dinner was announced.

In the evening, their amiable hostess proposed a walk to the village, the rural and retired situa-

tion of which seemed highly pleasing to her visiters. It was a lovely evening, and no view could be more beautiful than that which presented itself on their leaving Mrs. Irvin's garden: the trees were in full leaf, and, tinged with the setting sun, they immediately attracted the notice of the strangers.

"We cannot see such trees as these in the Squares of London," said Harriet: "I must acknowledge, that a walk in the country like this, is far preferable to the slow and uniform pace with which we are obliged to follow our governess, one behind another, round the garden of the Square, or up and down the measured path of the Park."

In the course of their walk, they called on one or two of the poor people who were unwell; and, on their return, they again had recourse to the music, which very agreeably passed away the evening.

"There are very few ladies among us," said Miss Arnold to Ellen, "who play as you do; you certainly have quite a genius for music: you can sing also, I dare say? and I should like to hear you."

Ellen was going to answer, when her aunt prevented her, by saying, "You will soon have an opportunity, my dear, of hearing us all sing: for we have an old-fashioned custom in this house of family prayer; and we generally sing a hymn before we pray."

Harriet smiled. "I thought that it was only at schools that prayers were read to us; our governess does that every morning and evening:

—I shall think myself with her again:—but we never sing hymns," continued she; "it is so Methodistical."

Mrs. Irvin now smiled in her turn, and answered, "That was an appellation she was not afraid of; and," said she, "this is a method productive of so much pleasure that I should be sorry to give it up: in former times, it was thought a great help to devotion; and I believe it is still retained in many families from that motive."

Such reasoning was quite unintelligible to Miss Arnold; but she was prevented answering by the entrance of the servants; and while Ellen played the Evening Hymn, accompanying it with her voice, the whole family joined in the solemn strain: nor could these young ladies help a silent acknowledgment, that they had never before felt so devoutly inclined, as when, at the conclusion, each knelt down, and Mrs. Irvin read a prayer with great solemnity; that, for the time, they wished they could experience the same when joining in the prayers at school; but there it was performed in so indolent a manner, and so much of form appeared to be introduced in the midst of very contrary pursuits, that little else but their length was thought of during the time of reading them.

The serious surprise which appeared in their countenances attracted the notice of Mrs. Irvin, who, after the servants had left the room, inquired at what time their governess read prayers? "Oh, just before bed-time, ma'am," answered Charlotte, "after we have supped, and are all got to play or quarrelling together, (for I think we do

one as much as the other,) she enters the room, and breaks up all our parties by calling us to prayers, which I can't say we much attend to. We go to bed, unless sometimes, when the rules are not so strictly attended to, we are allowed to finish our game of play before the bed-bell is rung."

Mrs. Irvin commended her for thinking such a way of performing our devotions was not quite right; and after supper they chatted together for about an hour, during which time our heroines found still more reason to rejoice at not having been to school. They were astonished at the tricks and sly ways, as their visiters termed many of the anecdotes they told them, which to Ellen and Anna appeared little less than cheating and deceiving each other; while the Miss Arnolds were much entertained at the surprise they expressed, and considered it as a degree of ignorance exciting mirth rather than congratulation.

The next morning the Miss Arnolds were busily employed in work; each was netting a purse for her parents, which she meant to carry them on her return: these our heroines were so pleased with, that they immediately determined to do the same for their father and mother—"We are to write to them by the next ship," said Anna, "and my aunt says I shall send the drawing I am now about, if I finish it as well as I have begun; but I think I can do the purse likewise, if you will give me some instruction."

This was readily promised, and Mrs. Irvin willingly agreed to the proposal, provided it did not prevent her attention to the drawing; which

she particularly wished to send them, as it was from nature, and represented a part of the village of Milwood, which was very picturesque. They were now eager to lose no time before they began their purses; and their aunt allowed the servant to go that afternoon to the neighboring town to procure the materials: so ready was she always to grant them what was not improper.

The next day the work was begun, and the whole morning was engaged in perfecting themselves in it; till Mrs. Irvin began to fear they would not allow time enough to their visiters' amusement, who already, by their listlessness, began to show they should not be sorry when the time they were to stay was expired. They thought the situation of Milwood uncommonly dull; nor is it to be wondered at, when the very different education they had received, from that which its inhabitants were blessed with, is considered; they could not conceive the pleasure of calling at so many houses of the poor, because the idea of doing them any good, or relieving their wants, never entered their heads; and when they heard Ellen say, that according to their aunt's instructions, she considered the good things she enjoyed as only given her for this purpose, they were astonished at her reasoning. "Besides," continued Ellen, "we enjoy our own share so much more, when we can reflect that we have relieved others with part of it."

"Your aunt tells you so, I suppose?" said Harriet, with a sneer.

"Yes," said Ellen, endeavoring to repress her anger; "and from very good authority too."

"Our own experience likewise," said Anna, taking up the conversation, "tells us the same; it certainly must give us pleasure to think that by us God chooses to assist the poor."

"But you ought to have thousands," continued Harriet, "to help all you know; and they are still distressed when you have done all you can."

"Very true," said Ellen; "and still will be: but they would be more so without any help; every little we give is acceptable to them, and, if given with a view of performing our duty to God, is of service likewise to ourselves."

"You talk so very religiously," said Harriet, "that I don't know what to make of you; but I must say, I pity you."

"I am sorry," said Ellen, "you should be so mistaken in regard to us: have you ever seen my sister or me unhappy?"

"No, not absolutely unhappy; but you never have what our young ladies call pleasure; I dare say you never went to a ball or a play in your life: we have public days once a month, and a dancing-school ball every year; and then we have so many smart people come to see us dance, and we gain such praise, and our master is so much obliged to us! Then it is so much pleasure to think of our dresses, for two or three months before the ball: the mantua-makers are all so busy, you can have no idea; and we try to outdo each other in the money we spend—for mamma always says we should spare no expense. And then, at other times, we perform plays; and we have spectators at them too; and we are always sure to be admired for one thing or another."

Ellen could not help pitying such ideas of happiness; but she only replied by saying, "She could not envy them either their balls or plays. As for the latter," said she, "I should never think of being a performer; and to dance a minuet before so many people must be very distressing."

"I dare say it would be to you," answered Harriet, "who have seen so little of the world; but we are so used to it, that we think it not worth while to dance when no one sees us. But now we talk of dancing, let us have a reel and a minuet or two this evening: I suppose you have learned—that is, as well as you can in the country."

This she proposed, as thinking it would be an amusement to observe their awkward steps; but Ellen, who did not consider it as any disgrace if she did not dance in the style of Madame Hillisberg or Parisot, readily agreed to it, saying, "We have a master who attends us once a week; but it is now the holydays, which is the reason he has not been here since your arrival; but we shall like a little dance this evening, if agreeable to you. Anna and I often play to each other, while we practise our steps; but you must not expect to find us great proficients," continued she; "for my aunt is not so anxious for our improvement in dancing, as in music and drawing, which, as we live so much alone, are amusements much better calculated for us."

In the evening it rained, so as to prevent their walking; but this they did not regret, as their dance was not interrupted, which, though with so small a number (as one of them was always at the

instrument), they kept up for some time ; and both the Miss Arnolds, contrary to their expectations, were surprised to find they could enjoy dancing with only Mrs. Irvin for their spectator, who looked on with pleasure ; while Ellen and Anna were equally gratified, whether dancing to their guests or playing to them.

The young visiters, after having spent one week at Milwood, began to be tired of the uniformity of the scene ; and, though Mrs. Irvin and her nieces had given up the greatest part of their time to their amusement, they could not but find it dull ; and Charlotte, who had at first shown an inclination for the friendship of Anna, by making her the confidant of her sister's humor, by many hints of the unpleasantness of her situation, endeavored to draw from her an acknowledgment that she was also tired of it. And one morning, when they were quite alone, she thought proper to make the trial, which she began in the following words :—

" I cannot think what you will do, my dear Anna, when we are gone : I shall often think of you with pity, buried here, as you are."

Anna. " I thank you for your compassion ; but pray don't make yourself very unhappy on my account : I assure you, Ellen and I never want amusement when we are alone."

Charlotte. " Why, what can you find to do ? Day after day to go on in the same dull round—it would be very tiresome to me."

Anna. " But don't you go on the same round at school ? Day after day, I suppose you learn your

lessons, and repeat them, practise your music and dancing :—is not this always the same ?"

Charlotte. "Very true ; but then we have variety, and so many young ones all employed in the same way : besides, we have the holydays to look forward to, while you have none."

Anna. "Every day is a holyday to us ; at least every Sunday is ; for then we have no lessons to learn, no masters attend us, and we have time to do as we like."

Charlotte. "Not as you like ; for I dare say your aunt makes you read sermons to her all day long."

Anna. "We read such books as we like, and that are instructive as well as entertaining. Pray, what do you read on Sundays ?"

Charlotte. "Oh, for my part, I never read any ! Those books that my governess says are fit for Sunday reading are, in my opinion, so very dull, that I seldom look into them."

Anna. "What ! do you never read the Bible ? you don't know that there are prettier stories to be found in it than in most other books."

Charlotte. "Sometimes we are told to read Mrs. Trimmer's History of it ; but I think if we go to church and hear it read there, that is quite enough : besides, it is so common to read the Bible, I think it is only fit for poor people."

Anna. "This is a very odd notion ; I should think, and indeed I am sure of it, that the instructions contained in the Bible are equally intended for the rich as for the poor : I cannot say but that I pity you now, for you do not seem to know your duty, nor where you are to learn it."

Charlotte. "Well, dear me! don't speak so angrily; you forget that we very often go out on a Sunday; and then, you know, there can be no time for reading."

Anna. "Ah! that is one of the rules that my aunt dislikes in schools:—that Sunday, which is generally thought the only time that can be spared from accomplishments, is so often spent in visiting! Indeed, you must excuse me, my dear Charlotte, if I again say I pity you."

Charlotte. "Well, tell me, then, where these pretty stories are to be met with in the Bible; and when I have time I'll read them, if I spend a Sunday at school."

Anna. "I'll write them down for you, and then you cannot forget them:" and taking out a pocket-book, she copied from a list that had formerly been given herself the following memoranda:—"From the 37th and 39th chapters of Genesis to the 45th, or to the end of that book, the history of Joseph is continued. The 17th and 18th chapters of the first book of Kings.—The latter," said she, "will show you how the Almighty showed himself the true God, when the people of Israel had gone and served Baal.—And from the 4th to the 8th chapter of the second book of Kings, you will find many interesting acts of the prophet Elisha: and indeed, all through those books are very entertaining, and I think the more you read them, the more you will like them. The book of Esther is pretty also."

Charlotte. (Interrupting her.) "These are quite enough, I thank you. I am sure I shall not

have time to read more than these; and when I want something to do, I will look them over."

Anna. (Very seriously.) "I hardly know whether I have done right in giving you this list; you speak in such a careless way of reading in that book which I have been taught to look into with reverence, and to consider it an indulgence to be allowed to read in it. When we consider for what end it was written, surely it requires the utmost attention;—especially the New Testament; for there we are to learn what will make us acceptable in the sight of God."

Charlotte. "Dear me! you think so seriously of everything! But while we are under the care of others, you know it is of very little consequence to us; they are accountable for our actions, and we are not our own mistresses."

Anna. "Why do you say it is of little consequence to us? Don't you know that, at the last day, we shall have to give an account of our actions, individually; and that even our secret thoughts are regarded by God, and will be brought into judgment?"

Charlotte. "I would not have such notions as these for ever so much! I am sure they would make me miserable! I think the best way is to try to please everybody as much as we can; and not to show our dislike of any one, but to behave civilly to all."

Anna. "This is certainly right; but not without something more; for let me just put this case to you:—As we are to live in this world but a very little while, and for ever in the next, is it not more our interest to please God, with whom,

if we act as we ought, we shall then be, than it is to gain the favor of men, with whom we are to stay so short a time? This life is not to be compared to Eternity; and it depends not on our fellow-creatures, but on the favor of God, whether we are to be happy or miserable there."

Charlotte. (Thoughtfully.) "That is true: but if we behave well to our fellow-creatures, God is pleased—is not He?"

Anna. "Certainly; but then it depends on the motive; if we are kind to men out of love to God, and because He has commanded it, God is pleased; but not if our views extend only to ourselves, that people should think or speak well of us—and not if we think that, if our actions are pleasing, it does not signify what our thoughts are."

Charlotte had never heard so much of religion explained before. The only encouragement which had been holden out to her as a motive for good behavior, was the approbation of men; and though the far superior one which seemed to influence Anna's conduct was quite new to her, her heart secretly acknowledged its justice, and she determined to think more on the subject when alone, or at least to read what her friend had recommended with greater attention than she at first proposed.

CHAPTER VI.

"Sweet Patience came, by Fortitude sustain'd;
The tear of meekness trembled in her eye;
But, cheer'd by Hope, no longer she complain'd;
And, taught by Faith, she placed each wish on high."

The following week, the Miss Arnolds left Milwood; and Ellen and Anna were impatient to return to their former occupations. That very evening they called at Dame Hunt's cottage, whose inhabitants they had not seen for some days.—They found Mary Forbes, the poor blind girl, quite happy at having been taught a new sort of work. "It is weaving straw, ma'am," said she, "for the carters' hats:—it is very coarse; but I am in hopes I shall make out very well at it."

Her good friends encouraged her in her undertaking, and then asked for her sister.

"Oh! that is another thing that makes me very happy, ladies," answered the contented girl; "for she is gone out to work; and Dame Hunt and I make out so well together, you cannot think; I know all about the house, and Betsy leaves everything in order, so that I can get what I want without troubling our poor old dame, who grows very infirm."

Mrs. Irvin asked where Betsy was gone, and found, that as she had, in her mother's life-time, learned a little of mantua-making, she had farther

improved herself in it, and that several of the farmers' wives in the neighborhood employed her by the day in that way.

"How good God is to us," continued Mary, "in enabling us to live so comfortably! When my mother died, I little thought that we should have been half so happy as we are; and it is a comfort to us both that now we can repay Dame Hunt for all her kindness to us, when we were in so much distress; for she says, she should not know what to do without us, and often blesses God for having brought us to her in her old age; and I am sure we have reason to bless Him too," added the grateful girl.

When Mrs. Irvin talked of returning home, Anna offered to stay and read to her young friend. "Thank you, Miss," said she, "that will be a treat indeed; for it is in not having somebody to read to me, that I miss Betsy more than anything; as, when she comes home in the evening, she has always something or other to do of needlework for Dame Hunt or myself; she says she will have us look tidy, and that no one shall say she works for others and not for us."

As Ellen walked home with her aunt, she could not help congratulating herself on the departure of their visiters. "How much happier is my life," said she, "than that which the Miss Arnolds describe! I cannot help rejoicing they are gone, as I am sure our employments gave them no pleasure."

"They are much to be pitied," said Mrs Irvin, "who know no other pursuit than what they call

pleasure; and still more so, as they appear to wish for no other."

I hope my young readers are all ready to acknowledge a life of active benevolence must be a happy one; to relieve the poor, comfort the afflicted, and to instruct the ignorant, they cannot doubt must be grateful to a serious and well-disposed mind; but then perhaps they would wish to add a few of what the world calls pleasures to these more sublime gratifications: and though, at the same time, they are ready to allow that the amusements they are desirous to partake of do not always afford the promised pleasure, yet are they more and more eagerly pursued, till at last all others are given up, even those their judgment once approved: I mean those acts of beneficence which are calculated to make us happy at the time, and afford us many pleasing reflections in their retrospection. Pursuits so contrary to each other can never be enjoyed together; one or the other will be given up: and weak and frail as our nature is, it is much to be feared that *that* which attracts the attention of the largest part of this world's inhabitants will also engage ours, particularly as it promises pleasure without any trouble or self-denial; while those of a more enlarged kind are not without their difficulties, and require a perseverance above the efforts of our own resolution to continue in them, contrary to the opinion of many others, who would draw us after them into the gulf of false happiness. But let us attend to the end of Anna's life, which will soon come to a conclusion; and then we shall see whether she had any reason to regret that

she had never tasted of the amusements of the world.

It was not long before she fell into an ill state of health; and though unwilling to complain, her looks were sufficient to acquaint all who saw her that she was far from well: instead of the appearance of health which once glowed on her cheek, she was pale and evidently much thinner; and an alarming cough too plainly foretold an approaching consumption. Mrs. Irvin was alarmed, as well as Ellen, on observing her countenance; though the invalid said all she could to remove their fears, and often feigned herself better, when she saw their uneasiness. A physician was sent for, who immediately recommended Bristol as the only chance of her recovery; and Mrs. Irvin determined to remove her there as soon as she could possibly leave home. Ellen was anxious to try what she fondly hoped would restore her sister; and fearful of losing her, she felt her affection daily increase. All her favorite occupations were unattended to; and while she dreaded the continuance of her sister's illness, she could think of no one else;—the poor were neglected: neither could she bear the thought of going to the school, where her aunt had forbidden her sister to accompany her, lest she should be too much fatigued.

Though equally concerned for the cause, Mrs. Irvin was grieved to see Ellen's sorrow; and though at first unwilling to notice it, she found herself obliged to speak seriously upon the subject. Going one evening into Ellen's room, she found her just risen from her knees, her face bathed in tears.—"You have been praying for

greater resignation to the Divine will, my dear," said she; "I have unwillingly observed that you have lately discovered a great want of it, or a weakness of mind which it is our duty to endeavor to overcome."

"Ah, how can I, my dear aunt?" replied Ellen, her tears increasing—"how can I see my dear and only sister so ill, and not feel the utmost grief?"

"I acknowledge, my love, that this is a severe trial for you," said Mrs. Irvin, sitting down by her, and affectionately taking her hand; "but remember, my Ellen, it comes from God! it is he who gave her unto us, and if it is His will to remove her—"

"You think she will die, then!" cried Ellen, interrupting her aunt; "Good God, support me!" continued she, clasping her hands with unaffected sorrow.

"That, my dear," said her aunt, while she kissed her wet cheek, "is a proper prayer, and God will hear and answer it: compose yourself, my child. She may not be in the danger our fears suggest; next week we shall go to Bristol, and she may recover: but if it should please God that it should be otherwise, will you be so selfish as to regret her admission into Eternal Happiness? Remember, your situation in life may not—nay, it cannot be expected to be what it has hitherto been: trials and temptations will arise, which, if it should be the will of the Almighty to take her to himself, Anna will escape. This has been the first affliction you have known," continued Mrs. Irvin, pleased to see Ellen more com-

posed, "and I am happy in seeing you apply to the only sure source of comfort under it."

"Anna will be happy," said Ellen: "but does my aunt think I grieve at that?"

"No, my dear, I think far otherwise; I know what you feel; for I have myself felt what I once thought the severest affliction:—when I dreaded the loss of your dear and now blessed uncle, I thought I should never know happiness more: but as he had always been my instructer, so then he taught me where to look for support: and when I saw so good a man dying in the blessed prospect of a glorious Immortality, through the merits and intercession of a merciful Savior, I checked my tears, and only wished to live so as, in God's good time, I might follow him, rejoicing in the same heavenly hope. But I am departing from my subject: to talk of the death of so good a man, raises feelings in my mind which I cannot describe; yet they are far from being those of sorrow: and may such, my Ellen, be yours when time shall be no more with your sister!—*she* has the same kind Savior on whom to rest her confidence; and, blessed be God! He is not unknown, or unacknowledged by either of you!"

"Next to the Almighty, my dear aunt, it is to you we are indebted for so inestimable a knowledge," replied Ellen, with animation, a gleam of pleasure breaking through her tears: "how highly have we been favored!"

"And is not this recollection sufficient to suppress every murmur," said Mrs. Irvin—"that we know in whom we have believed? Oh, it is a consolation which will brighten even the parting

hour with those we love, when we see them leave this world, their hopes fixed on a firm foundation, and recollect their lives have been an evidence of those hopes—that, though possessed of many frailties, there is no unrepented sin to darken that bright horizon which will soon open to their view, never, never more to know a cloud!"

"It is enough, my dear aunt," said Ellen, wiping her eyes, "it is enough! Anna will know this happiness, and I shall feel it too: I will rejoice in the reflection that she is for ever happy; and pray that I may so live as, when the time of my departure comes, I may share it with her. Anna is fit to die, and I will no longer mourn."

"These are precious testimonies, my dear," said Mrs. Irvin; "but do not be discouraged if desponding thoughts should again return;—we are weak and mortal creatures, nor can we always bear alike the evils of this life. Though at times, we feel strength in the grace of God; yet at others, we sink under our burden: but as we have found relief in prayer, so may we at all times apply to the same source of comfort. We will just look in upon our dear charge," added she, "and then we will have family prayers."

Anna's eyes were closed; but by the difficulty with which she breathed, they feared her sleep was uneasy: her looks were wan, and Ellen again felt a tear tremble in her eye, when she reflected that perhaps in a very short time she might see her still paler, and when those short-fetched breathings might no more be heard:—"She will then be dead," thought Ellen; "by, her soul will be with God!"

Mr. Herbert often called on them, and Anna was always pleased with his visits ; they looked on him in the place of a father, and both the sisters felt themselves comforted and strengthened by his conversation, which was well adapted to their situation. Before, when he called on them, he used to talk on various subjects ;—the books they had read, and the remarks they had made, were all discussed by this good man, who thus endeavored to amuse and instruct their minds ; but now, religion, and its consolations, were their only topic. The covenant of mercy, which God has made with men in sending His only Son to die for their redemption ; the full atonement which He has made by His death for the sins of the whole world ; and the strength He has promised, and imparts to all his faithful followers who are striving to do His will, were subjects heard with pleasure. In short, all he said was to prepare his young friends for the severe trial which was awaiting them ; nor did they shrink from the contemplation of the gloomy valley of death, when taught by their excellent instructer to look upon it as a passage to eternal life ;—they rejoiced in the prospect, and gratefully acknowledged a Savior who had graciously given to them, as well as to all His followers, a title to so glorious an inheritance.

Perhaps it may be thought that such a subject was quite improper for one in Anna's state, and that her mind should have been diverted from it ; but, far from raising melancholy ideas, it elevated her hopes, and she would often beg of Mr. Herbert to prolong the conversation, till she felt herself

exalted above the pains her mortal state occasioned.

The whole village was anxious for Anna's recovery; and on the morning on which the ladies commenced their journey, the door was crowded with people, who came to offer their good wishes for the recovery of the dear invalid: but Anna could only return her thanks by an expressive look; and when seated in the carriage, she seemed lost in thought, and to forget that her aunt and sister were feeling witnesses of her emotion.

Mrs. Irvin had hired a coach to take them all the way, and Anna had one side entirely to herself; where, supported by pillows, she bore the fatigue of her journey better than her anxious friends expected. Martin also accompanied them; and it was with a heavy heart she silently drew a comparison between the time she was last in a carriage with her dear young ladies and the present.

It was nearly dark when they arrived at the lodging which had been taken for them at Clifton; and after taking a little refreshment, Anna was assisted to bed: Martin slept in the same room; and the adjoining apartment Mrs. Irvin chose for Ellen and herself, where they once more offered up their prayers to God for the recovery of this beloved object of their care.

While here, they made no acquaintance, nor did they find Anna so much benefited by the change as they had fondly hoped they should. After six weeks' stay she became anxious to return home; and her affectionate aunt, though she would have wished to have tried the efficacy of

the waters, and the salubrious air of Clifton, a little longer, did not receive encouragement from the physician to hope it would be of any material service : she therefore complied with her request ; and they returned to Milwood, with that kind of melancholy pleasure it is difficult to describe, and distressing to feel. They felt pleased to return to their place of residence, and where they had always found happiness in imparting it to those about them, who, with genuine expression of joy, welcomed their arrival ; while their regret at Anna's continued ill health appeared in the countenances of all who saw her.

The next morning they were visited by Mr. Herbert, and he was received by all with unfeigned pleasure. "You see me returned, Sir," said Anna, "not in better health than when I went ; but I do not feel any regret, as I have not forgotten the encouraging hopes you have formerly given me : my aunt and sister, however, I fear, are not so resigned ; I observed last night they were less cheerful than I was on coming home again. I feel I am soon to leave this world ; but will you, sir, convince them of my superior happiness,—that is, if you do not think me presumptuous in expecting it ?"

Mr. Herbert assured her he thought her hopes were well founded, and promised to use all the means in his power to reconcile her surviving friends to the change she seemed so well prepared for.

Ellen's spirits were a little revived on seeing her sister so cheerful ; and she acknowledged the goodness of God in ordaining the decline of Anna

to be so very gradual.—" I shall be enabled to bear with composure the stroke which separates us," said she, " whenever it comes ; and I too plainly see it cannot long be withholden : she every day grows weaker, yet her strength of mind increases : Oh, may mine be also strengthened !"

For some weeks their situation appeared the same, though Anna gradually grew worse, and was soon confined to her apartment. Here Mr. Herbert frequently visited her ; and though she could not talk as usual to him, she received both pleasure and comfort from his conversation with her aunt, and the prayers he read to her.

Though it was now more than a twelve-month since the Miss Arnolds were at Milwood, Anna had not forgotten them.—" I fear," said she to her sister, " that Charlotte has not once thought of me since we parted ; but you, Ellen, may see her again ; will you tell her that, in my last illness, I thought often of her, and would have written, had it been possible ? And let her know also," added she, " that in my latest hour I felt more forcibly than ever, that all other happiness than that I mentioned to her is but visionary, and that religion, and a knowledge of the Scriptures, are alone capable of giving comfort at the hour of death."

" There is a Wisdom from above, my dear," said Mrs. Irvin, (who was in the room at the time,) " which we are encouraged to pray for ; and it is this you would have your sister recommend to Charlotte Arnold, as well as every other friend she may have any influence over ?"

" Yes, my dear aunt," returned the dying girl ; " you have expressed my meaning much better

than myself: but I thank God," said she, lifting her eyes to heaven, "I am not ignorant of it.—There is one thing more," said she, hesitatingly, "that I would say to my dear aunt;—but not now, I am not strong enough; in the afternoon, or to-morrow—if I live so long."

Mrs. Irvin, seeing her extremely weakened by speaking so much, advised her to wait till the time she mentioned; and then begging her to try to get some sleep, she went with Ellen for a little air in the garden.

Their whole conversation was respecting Anna. "What a sister shall I lose!" said Ellen; "I seem as if, till now, I never knew her value!"

Mrs. Irvin checked the complaint that appeared arising. "With her last breath," said she, "she seems desirous to do good; and shall we regret that she is so soon to receive her reward?"

"Oh, no," said Ellen, gratefully resigned to the will of Heaven; "I will pray that I may spend the remainder of my life in the same earnest endeavor!"

When they returned from their walk, on hearing from Martin that the object of their attention was now asleep, they went not into her room, but continued below with Mr. Herbert, who, according to his daily custom, had called to know how the invalid then was.

Betsy Forbes was a constant inquirer in the kitchen, though she did not always see the family; till, this afternoon, Ellen had her into the parlor, and by the resignation she herself showed, prepared her soon to hear of the death of her benefactress.—"My poor sister Mary," said the

grateful girl, "how will she bear this? she is always talking of Miss Anna's goodness in coming to read to her."

"My good girl," said Ellen, (endeavoring to check the tear that would flow,) "you must not talk so; I have need of fortitude to support the loss which is ordained me: if Mary misses her, what must I do? Think of this, my dear, and console your sister, and tell her, I will supply the place of mine to her."

Betsy wept, as Ellen was speaking, at the recollection of her mother's death.—"Oh, my dear Miss," said she, artlessly, "if I could but give you all the comfort you were so good as to give me when my poor mother died, how gladly would I do it!—but God can give it to you; and I pray that he will. What is your loss will be Miss Anna's gain."

While Ellen was thus engaged with Betsy Forbes, Mrs. Irvin had visited Anna's room, and finding her again awake, told Martin she would herself sit with her till the evening.

"This is very good of you, my dear aunt," said Anna: "I have had a very comfortable sleep, and think I shall now be able to tell you the only thing that remains upon my mind."

"What is it, my love?" said her affectionate aunt; "speak, my Anna, to me, who love you as a mother."

"Ah, it is a mother I should speak of!" said she: "it is for those who remain I am anxious: though it sometimes appears as if I had never seen my parents, yet I feel I love them still; will you tell them so? and do you think," added she,

speaking still lower, "that they will regret my death?"

"They would have reason to rejoice, my dear," replied her aunt, "did they know how well you are prepared for it."

"Tell them, my dear aunt, how happy I die! and that my earnest prayer has always been, that we may meet in Heaven. I should have wished, if it had pleased my heavenly Father, to have lived to see them return: but I am content—I hope I am—I pray to be made so; and may I not, my dear aunt, hope everything in regard to them—I that have experienced such proofs of God's mercy? Let them know," continued she, "that I died praying for blessings on them, and trusting in my Redeemer for them, and for myself, full of humble hope, through his merits, to meet them in the courts above! Will you tell them all this, my dear aunt? Don't let them forget they had a daughter Anna.—And now, what shall I say to you, my best aunt, mother, friend? for all these have you been to me! I would express my grateful sense of all the kind instructions you have given me, and which I now feel the true force and comfort of;—but it is impossible; I would thank you next to God, and thank Him for giving me such a kind instructress."

"Say no more, my dearest love," said Mrs. Irvin, much affected; "I am sufficiently comforted in seeing you so sensible of the blessings you have enjoyed."

At this moment Ellen entered the room, her face wet with the tears her conversation with Betsy Forbes had occasioned. "You have not

been weeping for me, my dear sister?" asked Anna, with concern.

"They are tears of sorrow mixed with joy," replied Ellen, kissing her pallid cheek: "I rejoice in your happiness!"—"May it be yours!" said Anna, faintly returning her embrace: "It is but a short time before I shall have the joy of meeting you in Heaven!"

Mrs. Irvin, fearing this lengthened conversation would too much agitate both her nieces, now took a book and offered to read a prayer: it was every way adapted to the dying bed, and concluded with a petition for their surviving friends.

"My father and mother!" said Anna, softly; and lifting her eyes to Heaven, she continued some minutes silent, after her aunt had closed the book.

Martin sat up with Anna that night; and in the morning her account was such as gave no hope of her continuance in this world till the next day. Her aunt and sister perceived a sensible alteration; but still she appeared composed and happy. "Remember me to the good Mr. Herbert," said she faintly, "and to all our poor neighbors, especially the Forbes's; tell them I have prayed for them all.—I can scarcely see you, my dear Ellen; but this is your hand," added she, pressing it to her lips:—"Farewell, my dear, my only sister!—may we meet in Heaven!"

She then continued silent for some time, while Ellen sat by her bed: her eyes were fixed upon her and upon her aunt by turns.—"This weak breath of mine," said she, putting her hand on her

heart, "is just expiring!—Thank God, I leave the world in peace!"

Martin approached the bed; Anna knew her, and in faltering accents thanked her for all her care, from infancy till now.

"Farewell, all my friends!" said she; and casting a languishing, dying look on all around her, she closed her eyes; and it was by her faint breathings only that they still perceived that she had life remaining.

All was silent! no tears were shed; and though this was the hour Ellen had so much dreaded, she was enabled to contemplate her sister's dying countenance with calm composure; till, with a gentle sigh, she expired, peaceful as the tender infant sinks to rest on the breast of its mother!

Her much-loved friends continued silently standing round the bed; and as they marked the livid hue of death gradually possessing her pale and emaciated features—"She is now an immortal spirit!" said Mrs. Irvin; "let us give God thanks for the blessed death of one so young, yet so resigned, and pray that our latter end may be like hers!"

Struck by her words and example, Ellen and Martin sunk on their knees; when this excellent woman read a prayer suited to their situation, and in which they fervently joined. After this act of devotion, Ellen and her aunt kissed the cheek of the departed saint and left the room.

Such was the life and death of Anna Stanley, who, at the early age of sixteen, had attained such a knowledge of her God and Savior as alone can render a death-bed happy: and may it be the

wish of all my readers to follow her example as far as may be in their power! The circumstances of her life were favorable to piety; but even in situations most opposite to hers, time for reflection and devotion may be found. If some of the frivolous employments of life were given up, what a store of comfort might be discovered for a dying hour! and if death were more often made the subject of contemplation, it would, on its arrival, be much less the object of terror. Instead of thinking what it *closes* to us of this world, let us reflect on the eternal scenes it *opens* to our view, and ask our hearts what we ourselves have to expect from it? If we have fixed our hopes on a right foundation, we may then look forward to our approaching end, as something more than a release from worldly cares; but without a true knowledge of Religion, have we not reason to fear it will be but the prelude to much greater and everlasting sorrows?

CHAPTER VII.

"——Father of Heaven!
Eternal King! Disposer great and good
Of life and death, of happiness and wo!
Teach me, whate'er may be my portion here,
To prove myself thy servant! May conceit,
Self-love, and pride, be strangers in my heart!"

The moment Mr. Herbert heard of the death of his young friend, he came to offer consolation to the survivors; but he found them, as he wished, composed and resigned to their loss. The whole village was grieved at her death; and on the day of her funeral, the church-yard was crowded with its inhabitants, who each repeated the good she had done. One recollected her kindness to her, when all her family were ill; another talked of the clothes she had made for her children; and a third mentioned a book which she had given her, and which now appeared of double value; and the poor woman shed tears, while she declared, "she would never part with it, but keep it for her sake."

Mr. Herbert spent that day with Mrs. Irvin and Ellen, who now appeared to feel the loss of her sister more than she thought; but she was careful of falling into the error she so earnestly prayed to be kept from; and though, when she went into the room in which she had been used to see one so much loved, she could not help a secret

regret arising, she would immediately condemn it as selfish sorrow, and recollecting her sister's happiness, endeavor to employ her mind in such pursuits as would encourage her to hope for a participation of it. But Ellen was soon to experience a change of situation, which nothing but the excellent principles she had imbibed could have prevented from causing an alteration of sentiment also, which, in an hour of serious reflection, she would have had reason to regret. Yet I hope to show my readers, that though her mode of living was altered, her heart retained the same desire of approving herself to God, as when, in the quiet village of Milwood, she had no temptation, from opposite example, to do otherwise.

Early in the spring of the following year, Ellen's father and mother arrived in England, after an absence of nearly twelve years. Mr. Stanley had considerably enlarged his fortune, and he determined to spend it in such a manner as should convince the world he had not lost that taste for high life which had obliged him to go so far to procure the means of continuing in it.

Mrs. Irvin trembled for her dear charge, when she heard her parents' intention of returning home, and of which she was informed but a few months previous to their coming. Mrs. Stanley's letter was short, but it spoke of the style of living they meant to adopt, and expressed a pleasure in the thought of introducing her daughters to the world.

Mrs. Irvin was sitting, with her sister's letter in her hand, contemplating the future destiny of

her niece, for whom she felt an increased attachment, and who was now become her beloved companion, assistant, and friend, as well as the dearest object of her care; when Ellen, who had visited the school that morning, entered the room. She saw her aunt's anxious countenance, and earnestly asked the cause. Mrs. Irvin could scarcely refrain from tears. "Oh, my dear Ellen," said she, "I am going to lose you!—a letter from your mother—"

Ellen's affectionate heart immediately took the alarm:—"Are they returning?" she eagerly inquired.

It would be difficult to describe her feelings on receiving Mrs. Irvin's answer. Fear and hope prevailed; though the latter was far less predominant, particularly when she saw the grief her aunt could not conceal.

There are times when even the strongest minds feel it difficult to support an unexpected stroke. This may convince us, that in ourselves we are ever weak and frail creatures.

Mrs. Irvin drew Ellen to her arms, and with tears in her eyes said, "How, my child, shall I part with you, who have been my companion for so many years?"

Ellen's heart overflowed at these words; and at that moment a sensibility, perhaps too much indulged, seemed to prevail in each.

"And will be still," said she: "what pleasure shall I know away from you? I know nothing of my parents: you are my more than mother, my dearest aunt; you have always treated me as your child, and I cannot leave you; it is my duty

to stay with you; affection, gratitude, everything commands it; here, I have occupations which are serviceable; my parents do not want my company or my assistance."

She was going on in this strain, so consonant with her present feelings, and laying out for herself a line of duty contrary to that which her cooler judgment would have allowed to be right, when Mrs. Irvin, whose returning reason seemed to awaken her as from a dream, with one word, or rather look, broke the delusion.

Ellen had ever been accustomed to watch her aunt's countenance, and there to read her opinion. "I have been wrong," said she, humbly.

"We have both been wrong, my dear," replied Mrs. Irvin; "our natural feelings too nearly overcame us: alas! how often do they lead us into error! Your duty is to comply with the wishes of your parents, and in this respect to obey their commands; mine, is to submit to the disposal of Providence at all times, and in all things."

"And mine too," continued Ellen; "God will, I hope, enable us to do so: but, oh, my dear aunt, what a change shall I experience!"

"You have looked to the right source of hope and assistance in it," said Mrs. Irvin.

The letter was now read by Ellen, whose heart beat at the expressions her mother used when speaking of their future life, though not with pleasing expectations of its gayeties. She was well convinced that happiness, if at all in this life, was to be found in the service of our Creator, and in the daily discharge of domestic duty rather than in the splendid walks of dissipation.

Mr. Herbert was soon informed of the important event which awaited our heroine: and, like her aunt, he trembled for her, and felt regret at losing her society. He advised her not to depend too much on her present sincere determination to avoid every appearance of evil. "We are safest," said he, "when we fear for ourselves; for then we are led to pray for greater strength than our own, and we are careful of our hearts, lest we forget on what ground we stand. You have been used," continued he, "to think every moment of your time precious; you will not, therefore, if you can help it, suffer any to be misused; and though it may not always be in your power to employ it as you could wish, there are hours which you may undoubtedly take to yourself: for instance, you have been accustomed to early rising, but the fashionable ladies, I am told, spend half the morning in bed:—you certainly may call this time your own, and thanks to your aunt, you know how to employ it."

"But on Sundays," said Ellen, "what shall I do then? Here I spend them as I ought; but in town, I dare say, I shall not go to church at all."

"I hope you will, my dear," said this excellent friend: "if you gain the affection of your parents, though they may not often go themselves, I dare say they will not refuse your having a servant to attend you there: and most likely you will have an apartment of your own to which you may retire; and there, at least, you may continue those religious exercises to which you have been accustomed."

"What comfort you give me, my dear sir!" said Ellen: "it will be a pleasure indeed, if I can in any measure pursue the plan I have been used to."

"But the places of fashionable amusement," said Mrs. Irvin,—"the balls, the plays, and the opera; must my Ellen attend all these? How will her own apartment appear to her after these!"

"These are snares," replied Mr. Herbert, "to those who have only a superficial knowledge of religion and its sublime enjoyments. They may, to our young adventurer, have the charm of novelty, and perhaps for a while attract her attention; but, in the hour of reflection, Ellen will see the vanity and folly, not to say worse, of these things; and her own experience will convince her that our report concerning them is true. We shall often write," continued he, with a smile, "and ask her if she does not find it so?"

"And will you write to me yourself, sir?" said Ellen, delighted with this hint: "how proud shall I be to hear from you! and my aunt has promised to write every week. I think I shall be happy," added she; "I do not now seem to fear my removal so much as I did: in a little time I shall anticipate only good from it."

"Remember, my dear," returned Mr. Herbert, "that good and evil are blended in this life: never expect one without the other; and forget not to apply to your Heavenly Father for support in both. It is not in the time of adversity alone that we want his assistance; our greatest danger is in prosperity."

Ellen thanked him for his caution. "How often shall I need your friendly counsel," said she, "when I have left this place!"

"I will give you one more motive for persevering in the path of duty," resumed he, "and that the most powerful:—Remember in what society you hope your dear departed sister is,—she whom you best loved on earth: and that, at her death, your only consolation was the thought of her happiness; and your earnest prayer was, that you might so follow her example as hereafter to share it with her! She is taken from the trials you will probably have to encounter: but the same Wisdom which saw fit to take her, will guide you through them. Remember your highest hopes, my dear child," continued he, with great seriousness, "and let not the vain pleasures of the world draw you from their only sure foundation —Faith in Christ, and obedience to his commands."

Ellen's tears bore witness to the attention she paid to this solemn address; and though she was too much affected to make any answer, as soon as Mr. Herbert had left the house she retired to her room, and on her knees implored the direction of the Almighty, and that Divine assistance he had so impressively encouraged her to ask.

The succeeding weeks passed quickly away in the eyes of Ellen; and it was soon known throughout the village that she was going to leave. All its inhabitants expressed their regret when the unwelcome news was confirmed by herself; but she promised never to forget her old friends, and

hoped that she should at least spend a part of every summer with them.

In a short time, the account of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley's arrival in England reached Milwood, and Ellen knew not whether to smile or sigh, as she read in the papers of the large retinue they had brought with them, and that they had taken up their residence at Mr. Arnold's till their own house in Grosvenor-square was ready for their reception.

The next day brought a letter from Mrs. Stanley to her sister, expressing her regret for the death of Anna, of which Mrs. Arnold had informed her, and hoping that, in the course of the next fortnight, she should have an opportunity of thanking her in person for the kind and affectionate care she had taken of her children; when she should, with Mr. Stanley, visit Milwood, for the purpose of receiving their remaining daughter from her hands; at which time they hoped their own house would be ready to receive them on their return.

All this Mrs. Irvin had expected to hear; and she communicated the intelligence to Ellen with composure, which the affectionate girl tried to imitate. She proposed writing to her parents, to welcome their arrival; and, after many letters begun, none of which she thought respectful enough, one was concluded and sent to the post-office.

The next week she could not help expecting an answer, though her aunt endeavored to make her think that the various occupations of her mother, and the many friends she would have to congratulate on her return, together with the pros-

pect of their early meeting, would prevent her writing; and she was obliged to satisfy herself with these conjectures, as no answer arrived, and the fortnight was now elapsed in which they had appointed to come. Ellen employed herself every day in forming plans for her future conduct. She selected those books she had learned most from, and had greatest pleasure in perusing, to take with her: and her music was examined again and again, not only to take what she herself approved, but what she thought her father and mother would like to hear her play. She visited every house in the village, repeating her promise of remembering them when she was far away; and with Mary Forbes she spent a little time almost every evening, in endeavoring to reconcile her to her loss.

At length a servant of Mr. Stanley arrived, as the harbinger of their approach; and when Martin came in to deliver the letter he had brought, she was nearly as much agitated as her young mistress.—"You cannot think what a fine livery he has, Miss!" said she, hardly knowing what she spoke: "Would you like to see him? if you go to the window on the stairs, you may, as he comes from the stables; for John is gone there with him, to put his horse in."

Ellen was going to reply, when Mrs. Irvin, having read the letter, gave it to her. "They will be here to-night," said she; and speaking to Martin, she ordered her to see that the best apartment was ready for their reception, and that ano-

ther bed was made up for Miss Arnold, whom they were to bring with them.

Martin left the room; and Ellen, with a trembling voice, said, "They will be here in two or three hours, I dare say."

"Yes, my dear," replied Mrs. Irvin, "and you will, I hope, compose yourself, and behave as you ought. You see," continued she, "your mother makes an apology for not answering your letter, and has brought Miss Arnold with her; thinking, as an old acquaintance, you would be glad to see her."

"I want to see nobody," said Ellen; "I think I never was so frightened in my life!" and she burst into tears. Mrs. Irvin felt for her; but she was not sorry to see this effect of her agitation, as she hoped it would relieve and calm her mind. Nor was she disappointed: in a few moments she dried her eyes. "I will not fear," said she: "why should I?—In three hours, do you think they will be here?" added she, as she walked to the window, and then to the glass. It was almost the first time in her life that she had looked into it with any anxiety. "I wonder how my parents would like to see me dressed?" said she; "I should not like to appear very awkward in their eyes; but I know nothing of the fashion."

Mrs. Irvin advised her not to indulge these thoughts, but rather to sit down to her instrument, and endeavor to cheer her spirits by music. After playing a little while she accompanied her aunt to the apartments prepared for their guests, and then retiring to her own, she once more implored the protection and assistance of the Almighty, till,

with a heart quite strengthened, she returned to her aunt, who rejoiced to see her brightened countenance; and they sat reanimating each other, till they heard the sound of the carriage approaching the outer gate. Ellen's color changed, as she saw her father's servant with her aunt's running to conduct them to the door.

"It will soon be over," said she to herself; "in one minute I shall see my parents!"

Mrs. Irvin went to meet them in the hall: but Ellen was unable to follow; she almost fainted when she heard the voice of her mother as she entered the house; and had not Miss Arnold, who was curious to witness her feelings, come in to her, while Mrs. Irvin conducted Mr. and Mrs. Stanley to another parlor, she could not have recovered herself.

The appearance of Miss Arnold seemed to encourage her, and she returned her cold salute with real affection. "This is very good of you," said she; "but where is my mother? I thought I heard her voice."

"Come with me, my dear," said this now welcome guest; "I will introduce you; she is impatient to see you!"

Ellen attempted to move, and again panted for breath. "I am so frightened!" said she.

"I can imagine your feelings," returned Miss Arnold: "but indeed there is no cause of fear; you will soon find your mother all you wish."

"Ah!" thought Ellen, "if I could!" as she was hurried across the hall by her young friend, who, opening the door of the room in which Mrs. Stanley was, said, "I have brought Ellen, ma'am;

she was so much alarmed and agitated, or she would have come before."

The trembling girl lifted up her eyes as she entered behind her conductress, and felt her courage revive on seeing her aunt's placid countenance.

Mrs. Irvin turned to the lady who sat next her, and whose eyes were fixed on Ellen; "Here, my dear sister, is your daughter," said she, "and mine also; for you must allow me to call her so, I love her as such:" and putting Ellen's hand in that of Mrs. Stanley, she added, "let me share her love with you."

"At present," said Mrs. Stanley, "you have the largest claim to all: but I hope," added she, drawing her agitated child toward her, "I shall in future obtain it likewise."

"O my dear mother!" said Ellen, sinking on her knees before her, "that I may deserve yours!" —was all she could say.

Mrs. Stanley seemed affected, and raising her from the posture she was in, kissed her with emotion.

Mr. Stanley now entered; and observing Ellen seated by her mother, he said, "Is this our daughter, Mrs. Irvin? Upon my honor, her appearance makes my absence from England seem long indeed! why, she is quite a young woman!" and as Ellen rose to approach him, he met her with all the politeness of a man of fashion, though not with the affection of a father; and taking her hand he put it to his lips, and led her again to her seat.

Ellen was astonished. "Is this the way all

fathers meet their children ?" thought she : " surely mine takes me for some one else ;" and she looked at her aunt to speak for her.

Mrs. Irvin felt hurt, and said, " Ellen receives you but coolly, Mr. Stanley : but her actions at present ill accord with her heart ; it is there she wishes to show you all the duty of a child."

" I am not sure," returned Mr. Stanley, " that I shall wish to receive it : to have such a great girl calling me father, would make me appear quite old ; on the contrary, I assure you, your sister and myself are returned very young : the years we have spent abroad, we do not mean to reckon in our lives."

Again Ellen was surprised, as her father once more approached her, and added, " Therefore, my dear child, you should have been but six or eight years old, and then, perhaps, I might have owned you ; but as it is, I believe you must be only my younger sister. Mrs. Stanley, what say you to this arrangement ?"

" A very good plan," answered she ; " for, upon my word, now I think of it, I should be ashamed of my age, were I to introduce her as my daughter."

" Whatever I may be in the eyes of the world, my dear madam," answered Ellen, gathering courage, " I hope neither you nor my dear father will deny me the affection I may claim as your child : it shall be my endeavor to deserve it ;—and indeed," added she, observing them smile, " I am not so very old, though I am tall ; consider how I have been educated."

" Very true," returned Mr. Stanley, who ap-

peared pleased with what she had said, "I can see you have not been brought very forward, and therefore I believe I may venture to salute you as my daughter—at least for the present." And with these words he kissed her cheek, and again led her to her seat.

Though Mr. Stanley's manner was not such as Mrs. Irvin could entirely approve, yet she was pleased to observe that he seemed satisfied with the appearance of Ellen, and was remarkably attentive to her all the evening.

On entering the other parlor where tea and coffee had been ordered, Miss Arnold, who had been a silent spectator to the above scene, expressed great pleasure at beholding the instrument, "her old friend," as she termed it; and promised Mr. and Mrs. Stanley much satisfaction on hearing their daughter perform on it.

After tea, Ellen played some of her best pieces; and both father and mother were agreeably surprised to find their expectations had not been too highly raised.

The evening passed off better than Mrs. Irvin supposed; and before they separated for the night, Ellen attended her mother to her apartment, and begged to introduce Martin to her.

Mrs. Stanley received this faithful servant of her children with some appearance of satisfaction; and now for the first time thought of poor Anna, whom she had left with Ellen under her care.

Martin could have talked for ever of her late charge; but Mrs. Stanley expressed herself fatigued with her journey, and they soon left her.

When they went to bed, Miss Arnold desired Ellen would come with her into her room, where, with many expressions of regard, she asked her, "If she was not delighted with the thought of returning to town with them.—Don't you wish to know when Mr. and Mrs. Stanley talk of going?" said she; "they will not stay more than one day; they said so on their journey: and indeed I was sure this *stupid* place would not suit them;—forgive me, my dear, but now you are going from it, I may say so;—we shall soon show you what life is."

Ellen sighed, and said, "Only one day will they stay? I hoped at least a week."

"Why, *you* are to go with us, you know," answered Miss Arnold; "and to London! only think of that."

"I wish I could with more pleasure than I do," answered Ellen; "but *this* place has much greater charms for me;—my sentiments are not changed since the summer you were here," added she, with a smile; "you know *then* I did not wish to leave it; and *now* to go from my aunt seems worse than ever!"

Her gay companion in vain endeavored to make her think otherwise; and Ellen was glad to wish her good night, and retire to her own room, where she found her aunt waiting to have a little conversation with her before she retired to rest.

Ellen told her what she had heard, and her aunt confirmed her fears by saying, Mr. Stanley had mentioned the time of their return; but at the same moment she would have removed them, Ellen looked as if she wished to ask, what was

her opinion of the reception she had met with; and Mrs. Irvin tried to raise her hopes from it. —"You had no right to expect very warm affection in your parents," said she, "separated at such an early age from them; but from your father I hope you will meet with encouragement, and from your mother increased regard: I joyfully observed your father's look of approbation while you were playing, and presage great things from it; he will not long think you too tall and too old to be his daughter, but will be proud to call you so."

Thus did this affectionate aunt endeavor to raise the spirits of her dejected niece, and after commending her to the care of Providence, left her to herself.

The next morning they spent some hours together before their visiters arose, and at Ellen's earnest entreaty she promised that, if Mr. and Mrs. Stanley asked her, she would accompany them to town, and see her comfortably settled in her father's house.

This grant, so unexpectedly gained, quite exhilarated Ellen's spirits; and she met her parents at breakfast with a cheerful air of unrestraint, and was able to talk of their future plans with pleasure.

In the course of the day Mrs. Stanley mentioned that the succeeding one was fixed for their return: but if Mrs. Irvin would allow them the favor of her company, they would prolong their stay till the following morning. Ellen could not help repeating their supplication; "Do, my dear aunt," said she, "pray do."

"What are you so pathetically imploring, my dear?" said her father, who had not been attending to their conversation.

The request for Mrs. Irvin's company was again repeated, and he joined in the entreaty; "For Ellen's sake, I know you will," said he.

This was a plea Mrs. Irvin was not inclined to refuse; and coming from him also, it acted with its full force: she gave her consent, and the whole party expressed their pleasure. As for Ellen, she was delighted: it was what till now she had not thought of asking; and, after having feared that the next day she must have been entirely separated from her aunt, it appeared as a reprieve from all that was terrible! She chatted with Miss Arnold, sang her most lively airs, and her parents had no reason to complain that she was too serious.

After dinner, Mrs. Stanley brought into the room several handsome presents, the produce of the Indies, of which she begged her sister's acceptance: nor was Martin forgotten in the distribution.

As it was a very fine evening, Ellen persuaded her parents and Miss Arnold to take a little walk; and though she did not lead them into the village, several of the poor people, on hearing of their approach, gathered together in the road to see Miss Ellen's "fine company," as they were called.

On their return to the house, they found Mr. Herbert, who had been for some days absent from Milwood, and, on his coming home, hastened to hear if his young friend had yet left it. Mrs. Irvin made him promise to stay the remainder of

the evening; and on her sister's entrance, introduced this worthy man, as one of their first friends. Mrs. Stanley received him with a cold civility; and, while she recollected his kindness to her in her early youth, endeavored to express a pleasure she did not feel at again seeing him.

This evening and the next day passed off but heavily to the London party; while Ellen, early in the morning, walked to the village, to bid adieu to all her humble friends; and leaving them with tears in her eyes, she repeated her former promises of remembrance.

Martin, that day, had full employment in putting up Ellen's and her aunt's clothes, with all that Ellen had desired might be sent after her; and she thought of the next morning with less apprehension than she could have imagined.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Still, as through life's perplexing maze I stray,
Be thou the guiding star to mark my way!
Conduct the steps of my unguarded youth,
And point their motions to the paths of Truth."
E. CARTER.

ABOUT nine o'clock the next morning, the whole party were in Mr. Stanley's travelling coach, and arrived in London before the close of the evening.

Ellen was astonished at the magnificence of the streets through which they passed. The carriage stopped at a large house in Grosvenor-square; when they alighted, and were shown into a very handsome drawing-room, where they found the other Miss Arnold waiting their arrival. She welcomed Mrs. Irvin and Ellen with great cordiality, and particularly congratulated the latter on her emancipation from the country.

This evening all was hurry and confusion; and Mrs. Irvin was glad to retire early with her niece.

When they were alone, each seemed uncomfortable, though both were unwilling to assign the cause of their uneasiness, and the fatigue of their journey served as an excuse for their silence.

The next morning the bustle in the house was still greater. Mr. Stanley found many things

which he had ordered for his own accommodation not done: this put him out of humor, and the servants were flying for the workmen to come and receive his orders. His lady was all the morning in her dressing-room, directing her maid how she should ornament her table and glass, and seeing her clothes laid smooth in her wardrobe.

Ellen also had her things brought to her apartment; but she felt no inclination to arrange them.

"It will be an amusement to me some time hence," said she; and her mind reverted to the day her aunt would leave her, though she feared to trust her voice to mention it; and the intervening time from breakfast to dinner Mrs. Irvin spent with her, in endeavoring to read and recall some of those antidotes to anxiety which they had formerly found efficacious: nor were they now unsuccessful.

At dinner they met their friends with placid looks, which only served to increase the chagrin of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, who had just been disappointed of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold's company to dinner; and this was enough to discompose them for the rest of the day. At a loss for amusement in themselves, they had ever been accustomed to look to others for a supply.

"What shall we do with ourselves all the evening?" said Mrs. Stanley: "if it were not so warm we would go to the theatre; and yet I should not like to make my appearance there till I had first received the visits of my acquaintance."

"Such living as this is dreadful," interrupted Mr. Stanley, who had been lounging in his chair, inattentive to all around him. "I beg your par-

don, Mrs. Irvin ; but I cannot think how you have been able to live so much alone."

"I never could have spent my time so much to my satisfaction," answered she, "without this dear girl, and books, and music : with these, the time never appeared tedious."

Ellen, at the mention of music, ventured to speak ; observing she had seen an instrument in the other room. "I hope I shall be able to amuse you after tea, my dear father," added she.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Stanley, "we cannot have music all the day long : besides, one performer is scarcely worth hearing ; you must learn to play in concert, and then perhaps you may amuse us for half an hour."

This appeared so much like a reproof to Ellen, that she remained silent and hurt ; but Mrs. Irvin, ever wishing to divert her thoughts from this subject, mentioned books to her sister. "Don't you find them an agreeable substitute for company?" asked she.

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Stanley ; "I think they are all alike ; and then it is so much trouble to choose which I should like : and when I have read, I find so little amusement from it, that I seldom take a book in my hand. But the newspapers are interesting enough ; I sometimes read them."

"Ah, the newspapers!" said Mr. Stanley, starting up and ringing the bell ; "I never thought of them ; I ordered one to be brought here every day : I wonder if there are any in the house?"

On the servant's appearing, he was answered, "none had been brought;" which produced

another storm in his countenance, and the man was despatched to procure one immediately.

By this time tea was ordered in another room; after which Ellen was desired to try the instrument, as it was a new one, and the maker had promised to change it if not approved of.

She was delighted with its tones, though sorry to observe it could not remove the gloom of her father or the languor of her mother, who, after the contents of the newspaper had been discussed, were again at a loss for conversation. Somewhat was said in the paper of the contents of a valuable library to be sold; and this reminded Mr. Stanley of having one of his rooms fitted up in this style.

"If it is the fashion," said Mrs. Stanley, "I suppose we must have one: though I heartily hope, after a few days, when our friends know of our being in town, we shall be so much engaged as not to have any time for reading, or anything else but dressing and visiting."

The evening passed off heavily, and the whole party retired early, determined, if possible, not to spend another day in this manner.

It would be endless to recapitulate all the visiters that, in the course of the week, left their cards at the door of Mrs. Stanley; or of all the mantua-makers, fancy-dressmakers, and milliners, that were employed to modernize poor Ellen, and to make her (in dress, at least) "a little more like other people;"—this was Mrs. Stanley's kind expression, when she introduced these fantastical fopperies to her daughter's notice, and who was

much displeased at her not appearing extremely delighted at being made the object of their attention.

"Oh, dear ma'am," said one, "Miss Stanley requires very little to make her appearance suitable to her rank!"

"I think," says another, "there is a great similarity between Miss Stanley and Lady Anne Forester, who is just coming out this spring. I made such a charming robe for her ladyship but last week! If you like, ma'am, I could, with a few alterations, make such a one for Miss Stanley: it was very becoming."

Ellen bore very little part in these consultations; nor could she appear so much pleased as she wished to be, when she thought herself obliged to her mother for thus endeavoring to improve her; though she could not help thinking the money she was thus expending might have been better bestowed.

The letters that Mrs. Irvin received from Milwood seemed to indicate that her presence was wanted there, and she thought she could perceive that neither Mr. nor Mrs. Stanley would regret her leaving them; yet the imploring looks of Ellen, whenever her departure was mentioned, had hitherto prevented her fixing any time for it; till, at the end of a full month, she declared she must name the day for her return, and nothing must prevent it.

Ellen heard her determination with a heavy countenance, and once had thoughts of asking to go with her; but the recollection of all her aunt had said of her duty to her parents checked these

suggestions; and throwing her arms round the neck of this dear and valued friend, she promised not to repine. "But you will write to me?" said she; "promise me again and again, my dear aunt, and if you should be ill, or at any time want my assistance, in what I know to be of far more consequence than the vain pursuits I must shortly follow, do not deny me the pleasure of again living with you at Milwood."

Mrs. Irvin returned an affectionate answer; and after having received from Ellen a promise of writing to her every thought of her heart, and from Mr. and Mrs. Stanley many unmeaning speeches of the pleasure her company had afforded them, and regret at her departure, she got into a post-chaise without trusting herself to take a particular farewell of her niece, who silently attended her with her father to the door; and when, for the last time, she looked at her aunt, the eyes of each were filled with tears, as Mrs. Irvin fondly repeated, "God bless you, my dear, dear Ellen!"

As soon as the chaise drove from the door, the sorrowing girl flew to her own room, where, without perceiving the maid whom her mother had a few days before hired to attend upon her, she threw herself into a chair, and burst into tears. The young woman appeared astonished, and, with great civility, asked if she was unwell, or if she could bring her anything?

"Oh no," said Ellen, still weeping; "I have lost my best friend! my aunt has gone! But do not tell mamma how sorry I am: and yet," added she, hesitating, "there is nothing wrong in it; and if there was, she would not be displeased."

"Dear me, no, Miss," said the maid; "your mamma. I am sure, cannot be angry: it is very natural to cry when we part from friends; and I dare say the lady that is just gone is more natural to you than your own mother; for I think I have heard that you have lived with her ever since you were born, and never saw your mamma till now."

Ellen began to recollect herself, and fearing to speak much on this subject, and to a servants, likewise, slightly answered, "It was true, she had left her parents so early that they were almost strangers to her when they met; and having lived with her aunt for so many years, she could not help feeling a great deal at her departure:" and thanking her for her attention, she dried her eyes, and went to seek her mother. She found her very busily engaged with her own maid in looking for a convenient place to deposite more hats and caps which were just brought from the milliner's; and seeing Ellen, she told her she intended taking her that evening to one of the public gardens, and desired her therefore to consult her servant (who, she had been assured, possessed great taste in dress) on what she would wear. "Now your aunt is gone," continued she, "I suppose you will want something to console you for her loss; and there you will hear some beautiful music, and see some fine fireworks: are not you pleased with the thought of it?" said she rather hastily, observing that Ellen still looked melancholy.

"Yes, mamma," replied the frighted girl, "I

shall like it very much: but shall we not see a great deal of company?"

"To be sure we shall," replied Mrs. Stanley, "or I assure you I would not go. But you need not be alarmed; I can venture to say no one will speak or look at you: go along, child, and consider what you shall wear."

Ellen heartily hoped her mother's prediction would prove true; and returning to her own room, which she now found empty, she was willing to indulge herself with a little reading: and therefore determined to delay the important consultation till nearer dinner.

When she had composed her mind with a favorite author, she rang the bell, and on her servant's attending, she told her what her mother had desired; and as Ellen was not very particular as to what she should wear, so that it was not what she called "very fine indeed," her choice was soon made, and she went to the dining-room with a determination to be pleased with her mother's proposal, and to anticipate only pleasure from the evening's entertainment.

Mr. Stanley dined out that day; but they were to go in Mr. and Mrs. Arnold's party, and several gentlemen with them.

As Mrs. Stanley had not yet given up the idea of being admired, she was not displeased at hearing Ellen had chosen a dress which gave her more the appearance of a child than she really was.

It was late in the evening before the carriage was ordered; and Ellen followed her mother into it, with a disposition half afraid and half pleased;

and as they drove to the entrance of the gardens, she could not tell what were her expectations. She thought of her aunt's arrival at Milwood, which she supposed was about this time; but soon the carriage stopped, and she was awakened from her revery, when she saw Mr. Arnold at the door of it, ready to hand her out.—Her mind was all confusion, and she was hurried along without knowing where she was, or whom she followed.

They soon reached their party, and immediately the Miss Arnolds seized her arm, and began inquiring if she was not delighted. A box had been procured for them near the orchestra; and when the music began, Ellen wished for no other amusement.

Her young companions, who were much more gayly dressed than herself, when they had heard all her observations on the illumination and ornaments of the place, were very willing to resign her whole attention to the band, while theirs was more agreeably engrossed by the conversation of the gentleman who attended them; and they silently exulted over Ellen, that they received more attention than herself; while she felt contented to remain unnoticed, if, without interruption, she might attend to what she thought much better worth hearing.

Mrs. Stanley paid little attention to her daughter; for, like the Miss Arnolds, she, too, was engaged in conversation with a gentleman: and she began to think, if this was going into public, she should not so much mind it: "I can sit very quietly here," thought she, "and be very agreeably entertained; and it is amusing enough to see

the company walking about; nay, I don't think my aunt would dislike this;—I wish she was here!"

But it was not long the rest of the party were inclined to sit; and Mrs. Arnold proposed walking through the gardens. "Besides, the fireworks are soon to begin," said she; "and we shall not get a good situation to see them."

This was not what Ellen wished; but she stood up with the others, and when no one offered her an arm, she remained distressed and confused. She looked first at her mother,—but her eye was never cast on her; then at the Miss Arnolds,—but they were laughing very loud at something their companion had said; and had not their father, with some good nature toward Ellen, reminded them of her, she would have been totally disregarded.

The youngest now addressed some conversation to her, and putting her arm within hers, they followed the company through some very pretty walks, with which Ellen expressed herself much pleased.

Mr. Arnold joined his daughter and Ellen, and conducted them to the spot whence they were to see the fireworks; with which Ellen was equally astonished and pleased; and on the whole the evening was more agreeable than she expected.

As she returned home with her mother, she thanked her for the entertainment she had received; but the lateness of the hour, and the confusion of the company she had been in, were so new to her, that she felt quite fatigued, and

retired to her own apartment as soon as they alighted.

There her maid attended to undress her; but Ellen, unable to answer all her inquiries, of how she had been entertained, and what she had seen, soon dismissed her; and having recommended herself to the Almighty, she got into bed; but the hurry and bustle she had been so unaccustomed to, prevented her sleeping for many hours after she was there. This made her later in the morning; and she found reason to regret the last night's pleasure, as it prevented her pursuing her usual plan of reading and writing before the breakfast-hour.

She now received lessons of music and dancing from the most eminent masters; and Mr. Stanley seemed interested in her improvement in these accomplishments. In the former, her native taste soon made her excel; and as she found her father pleased with her attention to it, she endeavored to gain more courage as a performer, and it was not long before she conquered the diffidence she at first felt when she attempted to sing and play before any company.

The summer was now far advanced; and as most of the fashionable world were leaving the town for a few weeks, Mrs. Stanley also wished to visit the country for that time.

Ellen thought of Milwood; but her hopes were soon checked by the mention of Brighton, or Tunbridge Wells, or some other place of gay resort: the latter was fixed on, a house taken, and the whole family removed there for a month or six weeks.

Here Ellen had the unexpected pleasure of meeting with her good friend Mr. Herbert, whose health obliged him to leave the duties of his parish for a short time ; and in his society, and reading the excellent and affectionate letters she often received from her aunt, she found more pleasure than in all the gay assemblies which she attended with her mother.

The unaffected simplicity of her manners gained her notice and admiration, which, in those who could engage her in any conversation beyond the trifling pursuits of the day, was generally increased to esteem. This, with the splendid appearance of her father's equipage, made her acquaintance more and more sought for ; but happily for Ellen, the excellent iustructions she had received were too deeply engraven on her mind, to suffer the compliments that were so often paid her to make any lasting impression ; and though, for a time, she seemed pleased with what she heard, the satisfaction was but transient ; and when retired within herself, "the world shut out," she would blush at the recollection of the unmeaning discourse she had listened to.

These were not her feelings while at Milwood, nor at Tunbridge, when she could gain permission to walk out with Mr. Herbert, who often called on her for that purpose ; and then, as it was his invariable custom to search for objects of charity and compassion, on whom he could bestow, at least, the comfort of commiseration, and oftentimes relieve the wounded mind, bending under the weight of misery, which mortal nature, unsupported by religion, would too probably sink

under, Ellen's heart rejoiced in the opportunity of relieving their temporal wants, as her father's liberality had put it in her power.

There was also a very agreeable family, with whom Mr. Herbert became acquainted, and whom the ill health of one of the daughters had brought to this place.

In her walks with this good man, Ellen had often met and joined them; though, in the places of public resort, she had seen none of the family except the young men, who there bowed to her at a distance, but, discouraged by the supercilious looks of Mrs. Stanley, had not ventured to address her as an acquaintance. With every part of this family Ellen was much pleased, and she was glad to hear they intended buying a house in the neighborhood of Milwood.

The round of company, and the late hours Ellen was now obliged to conform to, soon deprived her of that look of health for which she had formerly been both admired and envied; she became pale and dejected, and looked, like all other fashionable ladies, when not supplied by the roses of art, quite worn out in the pursuit of pleasure; but her mother appeared more attached to her, and her father was delighted to observe the admiration she generally attracted.

It was one evening, when she felt herself more than usually unwell, that she begged to be excused from attending the theatre; and though her mother feared the being so long alone would hurt her spirits, after many entreaties and assurances to the contrary, she complied, and Ellen was left to enjoy the evening as she liked. She only feared

it would be too short: and on Mrs. Stanley's return, she was so far from finding her complaining of the tediousness of the time, that she appeared surprised to see her so soon. For one moment, Mrs. Stanley wished to obtain this valuable knowledge of thus spending a few hours quite to herself, without being entirely devoured by the spleen; but she recollected her health and fortune were both such as would allow her to partake of every public amusement, and she need not study for solitary ones, since she was determined never to be alone; yet she congratulated her daughter on being so well able to amuse herself when deprived of every other resource.—"But why had you not sent for a novel?" said she, on taking up one of the books Ellen had chosen for the evening, and which was on a serious subject; "would it not have been a better companion than this?"

Ellen answered, with great good-humor, "Not in my opinion, my dear mother; since this book speaks truth, which novels never do."

Mrs. Stanley remarked, "she had some very odd notions;" and then proceeded to give her an account of the play, and the company she had seen; all of which Ellen endeavored to appear interested in.

The next morning she went with her mother to one of the public libraries, where, at her desire, she had before put her name, with that of Mrs. Stanley, to a raffle. Two or three gentlemen were reading the list of the names of the subscribers; and theirs were repeated among the rest.

"Who are the Stanleys?" said one of these fashionable loungers, who either did not know they were in the shop, or pretended to be ignorant of it.

Another answered, they were "Rich Nabobs just come from the East."

"They have one daughter," added another; (Ellen felt her curiosity excited, and her color rise, as they continued;) "but I hear she is nothing at all, neither handsome nor accomplished, but very awkward."

"Sure," thought Ellen, "I ought not to be mortified at this; I dare say it is the truth, though I have lately heard so much to the contrary."

Her reflections were interrupted by her mother's taking her arm, and walking out of the shop. As she had been speaking to one of the persons in it, she had not heard what had given Ellen this uneasiness, and therefore wondered at her silence.

As they passed the window, attended by their footman, one of the gentlemen exclaimed, "Ah, that's the Stanley livery!" and a loud laugh ensued, which still rung in Ellen's ears when far away from the place in which she had heard it.

"What is the matter with you, child?" said Mrs. Stanley; "you seem quite stupid." Ellen knew not whether she should tell her mother the mortification she had received, or not; when they were joined by another party, and she lost the opportunity; and as no conversation was particularly addressed to her, she continued to ruminate on it, till she was angry with herself at feeling it as such.

"Have I not acknowledged it to be truth?" said she; "and why should I be so displeased at it? Unknown to myself I have contracted a love of admiration; I already begin to look for praise, and to be hurt if I don't receive it:" and at night she took herself severely to task for allowing it to have this effect. She saw, from this incident, the necessity of increased watchfulness over her own heart, and determined to use a greater strictness and attention to things of more consequence than either her accomplishments or appearance.

CHAPTER IX.

"Retain the sweet simplicity of youth:
And all thy virtue dictates, dare to do."

On their return to town, Mr. Stanley entered into a society of gentlemen, to whom he had been introduced at Tunbridge, who were amateurs in music, and he became one likewise—or, at least, so he fancied himself; for though a very indifferent performer on whatever instrument he attempted, he now expressed quite an enthusiastic fondness for it. His house was filled with instruments of every kind, and both private and public performers frequented it.

Ellen's natural love of music made her enter into all her father's proposals of this sort; and she was soon one of the first performers on the harp and piano at all their private concerts.

Several ladies, as well as herself, attended, and assisted at these entertainments; but for a long time Ellen bore the belle, as possessing most taste and the finest voice.

Mr. Stanley was delighted to hear her praises; and, in return, he more readily agreed to her desire of relieving the poor, when she now and then ventured to mention to him some of those objects which, through the intervention of her maid, were made known to her.

It was now very much the fashion to make mu-

sical parties on Sunday evening; and it was a source of uneasiness to Ellen, lest she should be obliged to attend them. Her inclination never led her that way; and her parents, on account of not thinking her quite well, would allow her to do as she pleased; though they rather chose to attribute her refusal to the above cause, than to the serious hints she would sometimes give of the impropriety of such entertainments on so sacred a day.

It was but once that she was called upon to give a decided preference of duty toward God, rather than her parents, on such an occasion.—Mr. Stanley had made a party at home on that day; and Ellen (considering that if she *once*, with a wish of obliging him, so far complied with his desire as to be one of the performers, it would be leading to the same again, from which, after once engaging in it, it would be more difficult to recede) summoned all her resolution, and positively refused to join the party. Her request to be excused, produced for some time a violent altercation with both her parents. "What can we say for you?" said Mrs. Stanley; "you are not ill today; you went to church in the morning; and if you are well enough for that, you are able to spend the evening in company."

"No," said Ellen, "I am not ill; but my having been to church, my dear mother, is one reason why I cannot join the party in the evening."

"What notions are these!" exclaimed Mrs. Stanley; "indeed you make me quite angry; what harm do you think will happen to you from hearing a little music on a Sunday evening?"

"It is more than a little, dear mamma," replied Ellen, "and seeing a great deal of company; but I wish not to dispute with you: I cannot, indeed I cannot, enter into it. Consider how I have been educated; and my own judgment, as well as the opinion of those to whose care you intrusted me in my childhood, are against it; but above all," added she, with uncommon seriousness, "the commands of God absolutely forbid it."

Mrs. Stanley was extremely angry, and left the room, saying she was "very impertinent, and only pretended to more goodness than anybody else."

When they met at dinner, Ellen had to encounter the angry looks of her mother, and the severe displeasure of Mr. Stanley, who had been informed of Ellen's whimsical dislike of joining the party in the evening, "because she thought it very wicked." This was Mrs. Stanley's way of expressing her daughter's just and proper refusal; and again she had the difficult task of assigning the cause of it. Her reasons for so doing were more offensive to her parents than her refusal; as, though they liked not to acknowledge it even to themselves, something within told them Ellen might be right; and if she was so, her steadiness in adhering to it must be commendable.

They each commanded her to go to her own apartment, and agreed to attribute her absence from the company to a violent headache.

Ellen passed the evening quite alone; not so comfortably as she would have done had not this affair happened, but still with such a consciousness of having acted right, that she felt, were it

to do over again, she would not alter her conduct.

The next morning she was all attention to her parents; nothing was said of the past evening, till Mr. Stanley produced some new music he had bespoke the week before, and which was just brought home. Ellen expressed herself with great sincerity extremely obliged to him, and promised to use great diligence in practising and learning it perfectly.

"Will you?" said Mr. Stanley, whose good-nature soon made him forget the violent heat his uncontrolled passions often put him in: "there's a good girl; we'll have it the next musical party, and it sha'nt be on a Sunday."

"Thank you, my dear father," answered Ellen, whose heart quite melted at this condescension: "I assure you, you shall not have to complain of my want of attention to any wish of yours—that is not inconsistent with a still greater duty," added she, with hesitation; and she turned to her mother to exhibit the music books with increased pleasure. "Was it not good of my father, madam," said she, "to order them as soon as they were published, and without saying anything to me?"

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Stanley, not quite pleased with this early reconciliation; "I think your father and you are music-mad. I had rather play at cards at any time; though last night it was very well, as I find card-playing is forbidden on a Sunday, and I don't wish to do anything improper any more than yourself."

Ellen saw the temper of her mother, and made no answer; and the newspaper, which was al-

ways part of the breakfast equipage, supplied the deficiency of farther conversation.

Among all her young acquaintance, which was very large, Ellen found none particularly suited to her, or that could in any degree supply the place of her beloved sister. In her most serious moments, the recollection of the happiness to which she fondly hoped her lamented Anna was removed, and the affection she still retained for her memory, would make her more earnest in her prayers to be kept from the snares of the world, so as not to forfeit her hopes of hereafter partaking it with her. All the good resolutions she had formed when mourning for her death returned with double force ; and when, through the various engagements she was obliged to enter into, she found her affections weaned from Heaven and heavenly things, she would bless God for thus recalling them to her mind, and pray for increase of grace to pursue them.

In compliance with her father's wishes, more of her time was spent at the piano than she thought quite right, and, by her earnest applications, she was soon mistress of the new music he had presented her with ; and as Mr. Stanley was desirous that others also should witness her perfection in it, a musical party was invited, in which Ellen was the chief performer, and met with the greatest applause. Her heart was scarcely proof against this, especially when she saw both her father and mother delighted with the encomiums bestowed on her ; and she experienced the truth of an observation made by the wisest of men, that "it is more difficult to bear praise than censure."

She heard of nothing through the room, or even when she had left it, but the excellence of her performance ; for her maid had heard enough from the servants below (who are generally retailers of their masters' opinion), to be ready also to offer her compliments on this great occasion ; and Ellen was conscious that she took too much pleasure in hearing them.

The next morning, her senses were a little returned ; but still she felt more pleasure in touching the instrument again, and recollecting the praises she had received, than in anything else. No book pleased her like her music-book : but it was not long she could remain so unlike herself: and a letter from her aunt soon recalled her thoughts to their usual turn.

It was thus poor Ellen felt the evils of a situation in which many of my young readers might possibly suppose no evil could arise ; but as she advanced in life, she more evidently saw the pride, envy, and detraction which a love of pleasure and admiration insensibly leads to.

CHAPTER X.

"Pleasure is deaf, when told of future pain;
And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
Ears long accustomed to the pleasing lute."
COWPER.

MR STANLEY'S whole attention was now become so engrossed with music, that he was seldom engaged in any other way: and his wife found cards and dress equally attractive; they became quite a fashionable couple, were hardly ever seen together, and never in public at the same place. While her mornings were fully occupied in fancying ornaments for the evening, his were employed in looking over music, listening to the opinion of those he thought the best judges of whatever came out new, and taking every opportunity of making himself known as a patron of all who wished to bring forward any new piece, or to raise their characters as public performers.

Ellen, though she was sensible that neither her father's nor mother's pursuit could, in the end, produce the happiness they wished, yet felt unable to prevent it, and therefore continued to walk the same round, endeavoring to please both; and when she found herself gradually rising in the affections of her father, she would indulge a hope that she might hereafter lead him to a higher aim: but of her mother she could form no such pleas-

ing expectations; the continual round of company she was in, and her increased fondness for all-prevailing cards, with which, when Time is decked,

> "He charms a world whom fashion blinds
> To his true worth, most pleased when idle most:
> Whose only happy, are their wasted hours."
>
> COWPER.

—gave Ellen scarcely an opportunity of seeing her, much less of conversing with her on any subject, but in their different engagements: for as Ellen's skill in music qualified her both to give and receive amusement in her father's parties, she more frequently went out with him than with her mother.

This amiable girl had now been nearly two years without seeing her beloved aunt, whose heart yearned to behold her; and in every letter, though she forbore to express how very earnestly she desired it, there was an inquiry, if she thought her parents could spare her, at least for a few weeks. Ellen was as eager for their permission as her aunt; and with an anxious bosom she waited their reply.—Her mother said she had no objection; but Mr. Stanley remarked that the Oratorios would soon commence, and that he had procured tickets for her.—"Surely," said he, "you will not leave town at such a time!"

Thus challenged, Ellen knew not what to answer; not that the considerations her father had mentioned were of sufficient weight to prevent her feeling a little disappointed. Her rapid imagination had already conducted her to Milwood;

yet, as she was sensible her aunt would not rejoice in seeing her if it was not with the entire approbation of those she left, she called up all her resolution, and with great good-humor answered, "She was much obliged to her father, and as he was so kind as to wish it, she would defer her visit till the Oratorios were ended."

She did not then ask when that would be; but the next time she had the newspapers in her hand, she carefully examined if anything was there said of them, and found they were to continue during the next month.

Their daughter's so readily deferring the long-wished-for pleasure of seeing her aunt was gratifying both to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley; and the latter began to think that now she was a little weaned from her "old-fashioned opinions," she might become a little more worthy of her affections: but, alas! poor woman, her love was all centred in herself; and as at present she found no void in her amusements, nor any difficulty to be overcome, her attention toward Ellen soon wore off, and her favorite pursuit was alone the subject of her thoughts.

In Mrs. Irvin's answer to the letter Ellen had written to inform her of the delay of her journey to her, she congratulated her on the pleasure it appeared to give her father, and commended her for thus complying with his wishes.—"We must often do this, my dear Ellen," continued she; "and instead of being hurt at our disappointment, or proud of our self-denial, we should be thankful that such an opportunity is afforded us of showing whether we have really learned that great lesson

or not." She likewise mentioned the family which Ellen had seen with Mr. Herbert at Tunbridge, and which were now quite settled in their neighborhood, as not only an agreeable addition to their society, but a blessing to the poor of Milwood.

The recollection of this pleasant and worthy family made Ellen still more anxious for the time's arriving when she should be farther introduced to them ; but she was soon to learn that every pleasure in this life is uncertain, and called to a greater trial of her faith and submission to the will of God than she had ever yet experienced.—This was no other than the sudden death of her mother : for, to those so unprepared to leave this world as was Mrs. Stanley, death, however expected by others, must to themselves be always so.

The life of dissipation which this unthinking woman so freely entered into, soon led her to the grave ; but while she was able to get out, no persuasion could induce her to restrain her love of pleasure ; and, though her pale and lifeless looks at first alarmed Ellen, yet as, each evening, she saw her full of spirits, highly rouged, and gayly dressed, ready to attend sometimes two or three parties on a night, and never complaining of fatigue, she attributed her apprehensions to ignorance alone, and concluded that fashionable ladies were endued with greater strength than she supposed ;—but, in a short time, Mrs. Stanley sunk into a rapid decline, which prevented her attending her favorite parties ; though *then* she could not be without her dearest amusements, and

a few select friends were daily invited to form a card-party in her dressing-room. All the morning, she would have the mantua-makers and milliners with her: thinking this a good opportunity of consulting them, and ordering new dresses according to her own improved ideas.

The compliments these people found it their interest to pay her, flattered her vanity; as also the readiness with which her little *coterie* contributed to her amusement; so that the confinement she was now obliged to submit to gave her no uneasiness, and she thence drew a favorable conclusion, "that she could not be so fond of dissipation, since she remained so quietly at home, and no one heard her express a wish to go out again till the physician gave her leave;" her indisposition appeared to Mr. Stanley so slight, that, though Ellen wished to pay every attention to her mother while thus confined, he would not let her forego the pleasure of attending the Oratorios with him.

To one so fond of music, and so well able to judge of its beauties, as was Ellen, it is unnecessary to add, these sacred performances must give pleasure, particularly as her mind was attuned to the parts of Scripture which she heard; and heightened as their glorious beauties were by the powers of music, her rapture would have been almost divine, had not the vacant looks of too many of the auditors convinced her that she was not yet admitted to the music of the spheres; since, *there*, "all hearts exult, and with unwearied energy proclaim their Maker's praise:" *here* were few to join the emulative choir, and not many

who listened to their songs, as if they had no interest in the blessings they were celebrating, but chiefly praised the strain without attending to its subject.

As the time for Ellen's visiting her aunt drew near, she perceived with grief that her mother's health did not amend; and she determined at once to give up this long-thought-of pleasure, rather than leave her in so precarious a state,—particularly as, by the physician's look, when questioned as to her recovery, she feared his opinion was not favorable, and she ventured to hint it to her father; who, though fashionable in other respects, began now to be alarmed, and to inquire more earnestly if farther advice were necessary.

It was now Ellen experienced the severe trial of seeing one whom it was her duty to love and respect, drawing near her grave, to all appearance without one serious thought of her approaching end!

"Can she," said she to herself, "know that, after this life, an Eternity will follow; and yet, be so indifferent as to what it may prove to her? and that great day of Judgment!" continued this affectionate girl, thus anxious for a mother who had seldom bestowed a thought on her—"when all must give an account of their works!—can she know of this, and yet think only of cards and dress? Merciful Father! what can I do for her?"

Such were Ellen's reflections, on hearing the physician say he had but little hope of her mother's recovery, and that, though her disorder

was a lingering one, it appeared beyond the reach of medicine.

Mr. Stanley was not willing to believe this fatal prognostic.—"They are always for making their patients worse than they really are," said he, on observing Ellen's distress, "that their skill in curing them may appear the greater:" yet he felt some sorrow; and it was only by driving away the fear that it was not without cause, that he could expel it.

It was not so with Ellen: she thought of her dear sister's happy death, and shuddered at the comparison her fancy would have drawn; but she instantly determined to use all her time and endeavors in preparing one who seemed so little aware of the change awaiting her, for the like exit: but how was she to begin the arduous task? and when?—When she found her mother disengaged, (which was but seldom,) she would only talk of what would amuse her; and if Ellen offered to read, it was generally refused, or stipulated that it should be in a book that was entertaining; yet, by her assiduous attention to all her mother's real or imaginary wants, she made herself useful, and her company became desirable to her: for, though there was a seriousness in Ellen's manner which struck her as different from her other friends, Mrs. Stanley was always anxious to have her in the room. When free from pain, she would assume an air of gayety, and ask her daughter why she looked so dull?—"I fear," said she, "you do not like this sick room: I am sorry for it, for you make an excellent nurse. I

feel now," added she, with some emotion, "that it is a comfort to have a daughter."

This was acknowledging more than Ellen expected; and she could scarcely conceal the tear which trembled in her eye, while, reflecting much more seriously on her situation than her mother apprehended, she answered, "I am happy to hear you say so, my dear mother: but do you really think I do not like to be with you? Oh, I should like to spend not only all my time, but eternity with you!"

"Eternity!" said the vacant-minded woman, "that's a great way off: you have dull ideas, Ellen; that's the only disadvantage I find in you as a nurse."

"My sister Anna," answered Ellen, trembling and distressed, "did not think so: when she was ill, she used to say she found nothing dull."

"That's very odd!" replied Mrs. Stanley; "for in such retirements as Milwood she could see no company."

Ellen sighed. "She is in heavenly company now," said she, "and does not, I dare say, regret that she saw no more of this world's good."

"Poor girl! she saw very little pleasure indeed!" returned her mother, with perfect indifference. "But call Naylin, my dear; I think I could eat a little jelly. Don't you think," added she, as she held a pocket-glass to her face, "I look better to-day? or else this cap becomes me very much."

On such a conclusion to a conversation which she hoped would have led to something more serious, Ellen could not help feeling pity and re-

gret, but forbore expressing either; and, ringing the bell, she complied with her mother's request.

The next day, Mrs. Stanley was still better; and the physicians thought change of air might be of service, though they could by no means flatter her family that the amendment then perceived would be lasting.

Windsor was recommended; and thither Mrs. Stanley, attended by her maid and Ellen, was removed, by a slow and easy conveyance; and Mr. Stanley promised to pay them frequent visits.

She had not been there a fortnight before she fancied herself much worse, and was impatient for the arrival of the physician, who had promised to attend her, as she was at so short a distance from town.

When Ellen was called to conduct him to her mother, he said he was sorry to hear from the servant that Mrs. Stanley's spirits were depressed. "We must be particularly careful to avoid this," said he, "as nothing is so likely to be hurtful to her."

"But, Sir," said the anxious girl, "do you think that, with freedom from care or uneasiness, there is any hope of recovery?"

The gentleman hesitated as he pronounced his fear that a very few months would terminate her existence; though he added, "if the state of her mind were not carefully attended to, it might be greatly shortened; indeed," continued he, "her life depends upon the composure of her nerves." "But what," said Ellen, with great emotion. "what will it avail her to live three or four

months longer, if at the last she leaves this world without thought or preparation for another ?"

"Oh, my dear young lady!" replied this man of science, "you think too seriously of these things: there is little to be done upon a sick-bed! neither is it my province to prepare people for the other world; my profession is rather to keep them here: and I again repeat, that without great composure of nerves, nothing is to be expected; and, above all, everything should be done to prevent her fearing her own dissolution."

Seeing Ellen not disposed to answer, he proposed going up stairs, saying, "he should be better able to judge after he had seen his patient."

On his admittance to Mrs. Stanley she declared herself much better; though, before, she had fancied her removal had not been of service. She talked to him of her friends in town; and he, following the plan he had advised, endeavored to amuse her by relating several occurrences of the fashionable world during her absence; and when he left her, it was with large expressions of unmeaning hope that in a very short time he should find her quite well.

Ellen followed him out of the room, with some degree of anger at his duplicity, and then asked him if there was any appearance of real amendment?

"Why, upon my word, madam," said he, "I do not see any great alteration for the better; but I am happy to observe Mrs. Stanley in such good spirits; my whole reliance is upon them." And then hastily wishing her a good morning, he received his fee, and stepped into his chariot; while

Ellen, shocked at his behavior, returned to her mother, who now expressed a wish to have something read which should lull her to sleep; as, though she found the doctor's conversation very pleasant, she owned it had nearly exhausted her.

Mr. Stanley had been once to see them during their stay at Windsor; and next day he paid them a second visit.

As he dined with Ellen, she asked after their musical friends, and was surprised to hear him say he had not seen any of them since she left home; "In short," said he, "I begin to be tired of the same thing."

Ellen thought of what she had heard of the wavering pursuit of pleasure, and sighed to observe it realized in her father; but when she gathered from his farther conversation that he had entered into a set of high players, she feared this would prove a much more dangerous pursuit than that which he had abandoned.

On his taking leave of Mrs. Stanley, she pressed his longer stay; but he refused, being engaged to a particular party, whom he said he could not disappoint. "Besides," added he, with an air of forced gayety, "they have got a considerable sum of my money in their hands, which I intend this evening to rescue from them."

Ellen felt more, on hearing this, than her mother, who paid little regard to it.

Nearly three months passed in this manner: the physicians continued to attend Mrs. Stanley, and to flatter her with hopes of her recovery; while to Ellen they contradicted all their asser-

tions; and she remained in dreadful anxiety, doubting whether she should express her fears to her mother, who appeared to have no fears for herself, and whose conversation was continually of returning to the world and partaking of her former amusements.

Her father visited them but seldom; and nothing was said of the manner in which he spent his time, till one morning Ellen's fears were again revived by his very distressed countenance, and his appearing unusually grave as he spoke with great displeasure of the party he had been in the night before.

All thoughts of this were, however, presently driven from her mind by a still more alarming subject.—As they were sitting after dinner, her mother's bell rang violently! when, knowing the servants never left her, she was much frightened; and hastening to the room, her fears were still more increased by the maid's exclaiming, her mistress was dead!

Ellen ran to the bed, and perceived she had fainted: the common applications had already been used, and no sign of recovery appeared. Her distress was very great: the physician was immediately sent for; but before his arrival Mrs. Stanley seemed a little to revive.

Her husband, who had entered the room on the first alarm, seemed to feel her situation:—"What can I do for you, my dear?" said he, taking her almost lifeless hand.

She was not insensible of his kindness, though incapable of returning it.

"I feel—I feel," said she, struggling for speech,

"I must leave this world:—Oh, whither am I going?"

No answer was returned to this solemn question: Ellen's grief was too excessive; and her father, lost in sorrow and affright, stood gazing on the afflicting scene; it was what till now he had never witnessed; and a death-bed is seldom thought of by the gay and dissipated; yet it is what we must all experience. This Mr. Stanley knew; but till now, he had never viewed the awful certainty; and his wife's solicitous inquiry of "Whither am I going?" seemed to strike upon his heart as necessary also for himself.

Mrs. Stanley endeavored to say more; but her voice failed, and her eyes closed,—never more to open, but on eternity!—

Her afflicted daughter, falling on her knees, exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven, have mercy on her!" but this petition was unknown to the departed mother. Alarm and fear were pictured on her countenance, and it is to be feared she breathed her last without any preparation for a future life; though nature, conscience, all before this solemn moment, must have assured her that *this* was not to be the end of her existence.

Oh ye thoughtless votaries of pleasure! reflect on the end of such a life, and consider whether you can bear the prospect of closing yours like her! Look back to the happy death of a real Christian, exemplified in that of Anna, and say which is to be preferred!

"Sure 'tis a serious thing, my soul, to die!
If there's an HEREAFTER;——
And that there is, Conscience, uninfluenced,

> And suffer'd to speak out, tells every man;
> Then *must* it be a serious thing to DIE."—
>
> BLAIR.

—It is so even to those who, having found a shelter from the wrath to come, find death disarmed; but when the eye is about to open on another world, where all things are new and unconsidered of, how dreadful must be the summons! It is only by frequent contemplations on a future state, we come to know the true value of this: and then we learn the insignificancy of all earthly things, unless seen in the connexion with those of Heaven: it is then we see that our most trifling actions in this world are of consequence:—and yet how many are there who thoughtlessly pursue their own inclinations, neither reflecting on them *here*, nor considering that they must account for them *hereafter*.

But to return to our history.

As soon as all was over, in regard to this life, with the once gay and admired Mrs. Stanley, her husband left the room: while Ellen remained watching her mother, in trembling hope that she might, as at the first, have only fainted: but the wan paleness of death soon spread itself over that once handsome face, and she was obliged to resign the expectation her anxious affection could alone give rise to.

When she entered the room where her father was, she took his hand, but spoke not; and he appeared equally unable to address her. They sat in silence—Ellen's heart raised in prayer, till the recollection of her very different feelings on

the death of her sister forced a flood of tears from her eyes.

The attention of her father was awakened by her strong emotion: and he endeavored to console her, as one who knows no higher source of comfort than temporal considerations.

"Though this event was so unexpected by us," said he, "yet we might have been prepared for it: the physicians gave us little hope of her recovery; but everything was done to promote it, and we have nothing to reproach ourselves with: you, especially, my dear Ellen, have been a most attentive daughter."

Ellen's grief prevented her reply. The time of his own dissolution again rushed upon the mind of Mr. Stanley; and he expressed a wish that, in his last illness, she might be with him; he would then, he thought, be very solicitous in making those inquiries which, from the education she had received, he judged her better able to answer than himself.

"Poor woman!" continued he; "had she known how soon she was to die—!"

He paused; and Ellen recovered sufficiently to reply: "Ah, my dear father, it is the very circumstance of not knowing the time of our death, which should make us desirous of being always prepared for it."

The entrance of a servant put an end to this interesting conversation; and when they were again alone, he proposed sending for her aunt. "Mrs. Irvin's company might be a comfort to you," said he; "do you think she would come?"

"Oh yes, that she would," exclaimed Ellen,

"unless prevented by illness; which Heaven forbid! for if I lose her—"

—"You would not be without a friend, my Ellen," rejoined her father, affectionately: "your kindness to your mother has endeared you to me. and I shall never forget it. But come, write to your aunt, and I will send it off by express: if she get it to-morrow morning, she may be here in the evening."

This proposal was indeed a comfort to poor Ellen: and having written what her feelings dictated on so melancholy an occasion, a man and horse were immediately despatched with the letter.

In the evening, Mr. Stanley again reverted to the death of his wife.—"Had I known how soon I was to lose the dear woman," said he, "nothing should have tempted me to leave her as I have done; indeed, I would have taken up my abode here;—and it would have been better for me," continued he, thoughtfully, "if I had. Ah, Ellen! you don't know what I have done! Could you think that I have lost above fifteen thousand pounds at play since you have been at this place?"

"No, indeed, my dear father," said she, "knowing you were not fond of cards; but I hope it will be the last time you will lose, or ever play for such a considerable sum: if amusement can ever be found in cards, I should think they must cease to afford it when so much is depending on them."

Mr. Stanley secretly acknowledged this, but he only answered that he could very well afford it, and dropped the subject.

The next day passed heavily with Ellen. Her

father had already expressed impatience to return to town ; but she begged him to stay at least till her aunt was come.—As the evening approached, she anxiously expected her arrival ; and when the servant told her the carriage was at the door, her emotion nearly overcame her.

Mrs. Irvin was soon in the room, and Ellen threw herself into her arms.—For some moments neither could speak : till Mrs. Irvin, possessing a more than common fortitude, pressed her niece to her heart, and begged her to be composed.—" Oh, my Ellen," said she, " you have not forgotten where our true strength lies ? Look up, my child ; all is in the hand of God."

These words were as a cordial to the afflicted heart of Ellen ; it was so long since she had heard an expression of this sort, or had spoken to one whose mind was exalted to higher views than what this world affords, and who would admit religion as the truest source of comfort, and had experienced it to be so ; and she felt her heart raised in gratitude to God for having sent her such a friend.

" Remember, my dear," said Mrs. Irvin, " we are to look upon this world but as a state of trial ; if some pass through it without experiencing affliction, it is to be feared it is to their disadvantage." She sighed as she spoke, and added, " Afflictions are certainly for our benefit ; and it is in mercy they are sent. But come, my dear," continued she, " where is your father ? he must want a friend more particularly at this time :—Will he see me ?"

Ellen rang the bell, and sent a servant to inquire if they might be admitted.

Again Mr. Stanley felt grief; (for it would be uncharitable to affirm that it was only the semblance of sorrow he expressed to Mrs. Irvin when they met;) but it was soon removed, and his readiness to talk on other subjects showed he was not deeply affected.

When Mrs. Irvin returned to Ellen's room, by her desire she accompanied her to the bed-side of her departed sister. How awful was this scene! The recollection of her life could not raise their hopes of her happiness, nor would the duty of Christian resignation allow them to repine. Tears streamed from the eyes of Ellen, as she viewed, for the last time, the inanimate body of her departed mother; and had not her affectionate aunt, judging of her feelings by her own, hurried her from the apartment, her grief might have arisen to murmur,—perhaps to dispute the ways of Providence, which, nevertheless, are just and merciful to all; but if His creatures will stifle conscience, drive from their minds every serious reflection, and, neglecting the means of grace, seek only for the ease and pleasures of this life,—is God the cause? who, by His word, by His ministers, and by His providence, has given to all men, and especially in this Christian land, an opportunity of repentance, and of knowing their need of it? Mrs. Irvin had recourse to prayer, and afterward read to her niece several passages of Scripture in which we are required to love God above all things, and to submit to His will in every event of life.

The exercise of devotion calmed their minds: they retired to rest with humble trust in the Almighty, and thankful acknowledgment of His goodness.

CHAPTER XI.

"True happiness is of a retired nature, and an enemy to pomp and noise."

In a few days, the last duties were paid to Mrs. Stanley, and the whole family returned to town. Mrs. Irvin proposed taking Ellen with her to Milwood, as she much feared her late confinement and anxiety respecting her mother had injured her health and spirits; and to this plan her niece had but one objection,—which was, lest the leaving her father entirely without domestic society would induce him to be more in the company he had lately frequented.

She mentioned these apprehensions to her aunt, who, though she was not without similar fears, continued to press her leaving him for a little while, and endeavored to lead her to hope, that when all worldly pursuits were tried, and satisfaction found in none, he would more readily acknowledge the wisdom of theirs, and, from experiencing the evil of his errors, be more inclined to quit them.

On these considerations, Ellen, with a mixture of feeling not to be defined, took leave of her father. He embraced her very affectionately, assured her of his continual regard, and that. in the course of the summer, he would come himself to Milwood, and fetch her thence.

With many prayers for his welfare, Ellen entered the carriage which was to convey her, with her beloved aunt, to the scenes of her earliest youth, where her happiest days had been spent, and where she hoped once more to feel the pleasure of doing good.

Their conversation during their journey was of the many changes that had taken place at Milwood in her absence; several of her poor old friends were dead; and Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, the family mentioned before, were settled in their neighborhood.

As they approached the place, Ellen's heart beat high with expectation; she forgot her recent cause for sorrow; and the thought of soon seeing her dear and good Martin gave way to all others.

"Mr. Herbert, too, I shall see him; but not to-night," added she, checking her impatience; and at that moment looking out of the window, she saw him riding with another gentleman, whom she recollected to be Mr. Campbell. Though he was nearly a stranger to her, she could not repress her desire of speaking to her old and valued friend; and as his attention seemed to be drawn toward the carriage, she waved her hand, and was soon recognised by Mr. Herbert, who immediately rode to the side of it; and the joy of again meeting each other appeared equal in both.

Martin was at the door to receive her mistress; and her countenance beamed with joy on seeing Ellen with her, who at that moment forgot every other object of attention, and flew to embrace the nurse of her childhood, with the same affection

as if she had been still an infant, and stood in need of her protection and assistance.

All the servants now came round her, each desirous of her notice; and she spoke to them with the kindness their former services merited; though, to use their own expression, "she had been so long in London, and looked so like a fine lady."

Their arrival was soon announced through all the village; but the account "that Miss Ellen was come down with their good lady," could scarcely be credited, till several of the inhabitants had been to the door to inquire of the servants if it really were so.

"And is she as free as ever?" said they: "God bless her! To-night, to be sure, we must not think of seeing her; but to-morrow we hope we shall."

"Thank God, I am alive to see my dear young lady once more!" said poor old Dame Hunt, when Betsy Forbes, who was one of the first to make the inquiry, told her the welcome news: "and will she talk to us and read to us the same as ever? Oh, Mary, this is a happy day for you and me!" added the good old woman.

"Ay, and for all of us!" replied one of a numerous flock of girls belonging to the school who had assembled round the door to hear the joyful tidings. "If she does not come among us before, at least we shall see her at church; for I am sure she will be there. Oh, how I wish Sunday was come!"

But they had not so long to wait for their expected pleasure; as the very next morning Ellen,

who was quite as impatient to see them, walked first to Dame Hunt's, and then to the school, convincing them all, by her accustomed kindness, that she had not forgotten her promise of remembering them in her absence. To all she met, she spoke with the affection of a friend; while the artless simplicity with which they welcomed her reappearance among them drew tears from her eyes.

On her return to her aunt, she found Mr. Herbert with her; and her first transport of pleasure having now subsided, she could talk with this excellent man, and listen to his improving conversation with gratitude and attention.

He but slightly adverted to the melancholy scene she had lately witnessed; but on observing the gloomy sorrow which immediately overspread her countenance at the least mention of her mother's death, he endeavored to remove it by every argument in his power, confirmed by the consolations and commands of Scripture.

The grateful girl shed tears of pity and regret, when she considered how little of these her lamented mother had known; and the fear that she had not sufficiently studied the opportunities of impressing them on her mind again assailed her.

Mr. Herbert tried to comfort her under these doubts; he made allowances for her which she could not admit for herself; but his chief arguments were drawn from the comforting assurance, that her desire was known to God, and that, through her Redeemer, her services, though imperfect, would be accepted.

The entrance of Mrs. Campbell and two of her

daughters put a stop to this interesting conversation; and Ellen was obliged to suppress her feelings while she attended to the forms of civility, and received the young ladies as her visiters.

Mrs. Irvin appeared much obliged by her early visit; and Ellen promised herself great pleasure in forming a sincere friendship with them.

They talked of the walks they should take together, of the private concerts and reading-parties which they should form, till Ellen's eyes beamed with pleasure at the thought of once more participating in these innocent enjoyments.

Mr. Herbert attended these ladies home; and Mrs. Irvin and Ellen spent the rest of the day quite alone.

As the latter wandered through the house and lingered in every room which brought to her memory any remembrance of her sister, how did her heart sigh at the recollection! Yet the retrospect of the days she had spent since, deprived of that dear friend, was still more distressing.

"Thus it is," said she, "that experience makes us wise: how happy am I once more to return to such a home! I am not fit to live in the world; this is the only place to be happy in."

"Ah, my dear," replied her aunt, "you must not expect it even here; there are snares for our happiness in every place; it is not *where* we are —not from *ourselves*, that we must expect protection from them: and as we must look for happiness above, so must we look thither for help and assistance also to attain it."

In a few days, Mrs. Irvin and her niece returned the visit of Mrs. and Miss Campbell; and El-

len was highly pleased with the whole family. Large as it was, they were all employed, and all seemed united in a wish to be useful to each other. There were five girls and three little boys, whom the eldest sister was instructing to read; the younger girls were also under her tuition; and every hour of her time was devoted to their improvement, and fully occupied.

When Mrs. Irvin and Ellen entered, their morning tasks were just completed, and they went, as usual, to amuse themselves in the garden.

Thither Ellen walked with the elder Miss Campbell, and found the children sitting under a shady tree, all at play together. They seemed so happy, that, though Ellen wished to go and talk to them, she feared disturbing their pleasure, till Miss Campbell led her that way, and introduced them to her notice.

Although they had not been accustomed to converse with strangers, there was such kindness in Ellen's manner, that they soon became acquainted with her: and on their returning to the house, all the young ones were of the party.

The youngest, little Caroline, particularly attracted her attention, and Mrs. Irvin proposed taking her home to dinner:—"And then," said she, "we may hope for the company of some of the elder ladies, who will fetch their sister home."

The face of the innocent child was covered with blushes at the unexpected invitation, and she looked anxiously at her mother for permission; who, on hearing from her sister that she

had been very attentive to her lessons that morning, gave her consent; and the little girl ran to be dressed for her visit.

When she had kissed all her brothers and sisters, she tripped away by the side of Ellen, half pleased, and half afraid to find herself entirely among strangers; but when she entered Mrs. Irvin's house, the attentive fondness of her new friend soon dissipated her fears. She was not quite five years old; but her understanding was far above her years, and had already been greatly cultivated.

After dinner, Ellen played a favorite country dance.—"Shall I dance to you?" said the delighted child; "I do at home, whenever my sister plays that dance."

Ellen could not help smiling to see her jump about the room, and gave her great praise for keeping so true to the music.

"Oh," said Caroline, "if you were to see my sisters Lucy and Fanny, you would say they dance well: but they are older than I am, you know."

When Ellen asked if they had any master, she did not know what was meant by the question.—"What!" said she, "does a master teach children to dance? I only know little Master Lambert, and I am sure he cannot dance so well as Lucy or Fanny:—we teach ourselves."

When asked what her sister taught her, she replied: "The first lesson we learn every morning, is to know God; for, my sister says, that is the thing of most consequence; and so I think, because he is so very good to us, you know."

Ellen thought so too.—"And how are you taught to know him?" said she. "Oh! have you never seen Mrs. Trimmer's books?" replied the child; "my sister teaches us out of them, and explains them to us, and we learn some every day; and then we spell, and my sisters write, but I don't; and we play at cards."

"Play cards!" said Ellen; "sure, that is not a lesson you are taught?"

"Yes, we are; and we learn a great deal from them—that is, my brothers and sisters do: but I cannot understand them yet; so I have only now and then one,—such as, 'London is the capital city of England, and Edinburgh of Scotland.'"

"Are they Geographical Cards you play with?" said Ellen.

"Yes; and sometimes Historical Cards: we play with them of an evening, when it is winter, but not in the summer. I can work too," continued she: "and I read a great deal every morning."

"How much have you read to-day?" said Ellen, smiling.

"Three pages, at different times; besides spelling eight words out of a book, and saying my first lesson from Mrs. Trimmer."

When this little chatterer saw, from the parlor-window, her eldest sister at a distance, coming toward the house, she blushed and said, "Dear me, I hope I have not talked too much; have I, ma'am?" addressing Mrs. Irvin; "for they told me they were afraid I should be troublesome: have I, Miss Stanley?"

Mrs. Irvin and Ellen both assured her to the

contrary: and she began to talk again.—"How much I shall have to tell my sister before I go to bed? You don't know how good she is to us," continued she: "every evening she makes us recollect if we have done anything to offend God; and then, when we say our prayers, she says we may beg to be forgiven for Jesus Christ's sake."

"You have a very excellent sister indeed," said Ellen, "that will take such pains with you."

"Oh! she does take pains indeed," said the charming child: "but here she is," added she; and leaping into her sister's arms, who just then entered the room, she exclaimed, "Oh, my dear sister! you don't know how happy I have been! I hope Lucy and Fanny will come soon, and spend just such another day."

Though this was rather like asking for an invitation for them, it was uttered with such simplicity, that her sister could not check her for it; but returning her embrace, she asked if she had forgotten the caution she had given her;—"I am afraid you have tired Miss Stanley with your tongue?"—but when Ellen replied in the negative, Caroline exclaimed, with pleasure, "I am glad of it; for though Mrs. Irvin and Miss Stanley were good enough to tell me I did not talk too much, I was almost afraid I had; yet, as I never came out on a visit before, I hoped too that they would excuse me."

The sisters returned early that evening, on Caroline's account, whom Mrs. Irvin kissed at parting; and desired her to give her love to her

other sisters, and say, she hoped to see them soon.

This invitation seemed to give the little girl as much pleasure as her own ; and as she took leave of Ellen, who walked part of the way with them, she whispered her, " I shall tell Lucy and Fanny what Mrs. Irvin said ; they will be so happy ; and I am sure I am much obliged to you for the pleasant day I have had. I shall thank God for it, also, in my prayers to-night ; for my sister says we should always do so, when we have been particularly happy ; and I am sure I have."

Ellen kissed the innocent child ; and telling her she loved her better than ever, she parted from her eldest sister with higher notions of respect and esteem, and a still greater desire to become more and more intimate with them.

In a short time these families were seldom apart ; and their frequent meetings were made still more pleasant by the intent of them, which was either to relieve the poor, or improve themselves by reading to each other what would instruct them in the great duties of the Christian life. They seldom walked without entering into some cottage, where it was their aim to remove the wants of the inmates, comfort their sorrows, and encourage industry. In short, Milwood was noted through the country, as " the happy parish !" and there were none of its inhabitants who did not bear witness to the title.

Ellen had her little favorite often with her, but not till Lucy and Fanny had paid their promised visit ; and if at any time these children were inattentive to their lessons, it was soon considered

as their greatest punishment to be refused going to Mrs. Irvin's the next time they were asked.

The summer passed quickly away; but Ellen could not lose all anxiety respecting her father: she had often written to him, but received no answer except through Miss Arnold, with whom, for his sake, she kept up a correspondence. She assured her that he was well; and, as he was always engaged, they concluded he must be happy: but Ellen received very little pleasure from this information.

The winter approached, and Mr. Stanley appeared to have forgotten his promise of fetching his daughter from Milwood. The Miss Campbells saw her uneasiness, though they knew not the cause; and endeavored, by drawing the most favorable picture of the approaching season, to remove it. They talked of their weekly dances for the children, and that a bed would be always prepared for her whenever she liked to join their party: they had music in variety; and their eldest brother also, who had been hitherto engaged as a private tutor to a young nobleman, was expected to spend the winter with them, when their working parties would be greatly enlivened by his reading to them.

Ellen rejoiced in their happiness; and nothing but the hope of being useful to her father could induce her to wish to leave such companions, whom Mrs. Irvin promoted her being with as much as possible; for, though it sometimes deprived her of Ellen's company, she hoped the society of these young people would raise her spirits, and enable her to bear with fortitude the

trial she feared would soon await her, as, while she encouraged not Ellen's uneasiness, her own apprehensions respecting Mr. Stanley were not of a less serious nature.

When the winter was quite set in, Ellen could not be so constant a visiter at the Campbells' as formerly; and one morning, as she was mentioning to her aunt, as an extraordinary circumstance, that she had not seen any of the family for three or four days, the eldest Miss Campbell entered the room.

There was a more than usual seriousness on her countenance; and Ellen, scarcely knowing what she feared, earnestly inquired the cause. Her friend hesitated; and at length said, she wished to speak to Mrs. Irvin alone.

"It is uneasiness about me that gives you uneasiness then: but do not be afraid to speak; you know I shall be enabled to hear ill news of whatever sort it may be."

Observing Miss Campbell's distress increase, she added, "Does it relate to my father? do tell me!" Her fears gathering strength from suspense, she exclaimed, "He is not dead? God forbid it!" Her agitation would not allow her to say more; but she looked with beseeching entreaty toward Miss Campbell for an answer, who hastened to relieve her terror, by assuring her Mr. Stanley was living; but she acknowledged, from the account her brother had brought, who had arrived the evening before, it was feared that he was very ill; and her parents thought they should not act a friendly part toward her, in not informing her of it.

"Oh! let us go to him directly, my dear aunt!" said Ellen, rising from her chair. "You will not refuse; pray let us go immediately."

"Compose yourself, my dearest child," replied Mrs. Irvin; "and be assured I am ready to accompany you: but remember, while you are so agitated, your company will rather distress than give your father pleasure."

"I will be composed," said Ellen; "indeed I will: it was only my first alarm that occasioned all this terror."

Mrs. Irvin saw, in Miss Campbell's countenance, that there was something yet untold; she therefore bade the agitated girl immediately go and tell Martin to put up their clothes, and to send William to order a carriage at whatever time she herself should choose. Ellen thanked her for this proof of kindness; and, with her whole thoughts occupied on what might be the state of her father, she left the room to obey her directions.

Miss Campbell then informed Mrs. Irvin, that her brother had heard Mr. Stanley had greatly lessened his fortune by gaming, and that his illness was occasioned by the anxiety of his mind on that account.

It being early in the morning, Mrs. Irvin was as desirous as Ellen of hastening their journey; and hoped, by setting off directly, they should be in town that evening.

At that moment Mr. Herbert, who had heard still more of Mr. Stanley's situation from the younger Mr. Campbell, came in; and observing their earnest wish of being there as soon as possible, he kindly offered to accompany them.

This was what Ellen particularly wished; and as the gentleman who had just arrived, had engaged to supply Mr. Herbert's place in the performance of his parochial duties, he had nothing to prevent his compliance.

With such a companion during their journey, our heroine in some measure regained her usual composure; but she had no sooner entered her father's house, than all her agitation returned.

She was scarcely out of the chaise, before she asked his man, the only servant they saw, and who seemed surprised at the arrival, "how his master was?"

"He is very ill, madam," said he, as he showed them into a cold and comfortless apartment; "he has not been out of his bed for several days. I do not know how he will like your coming, madam," said he.

"Tell him I am here," said Ellen, disregarding the latter part of his answer. The man seemed distressed, and unwilling to leave the room: "Sure you know me?" said Ellen, greatly hurried; "I am his daughter!"

"Yes, yes, madam; but I fear he will be greatly displeased; he is so very particular. I mentioned informing you of his illness; but he said you were the last person he wished to see."

"What!" replied Ellen, "not wish to see me—his child! What can I have done to offend him? But I must and will see him; tell him I will nurse him—I will do everything for him."

Her aunt and Mr. Herbert were hurt at her distress; and, as the man still seemed unwilling to

inform his master, the latter suggested her writing a note and sending to him.

When this was carried, her aunt could scarcely restrain her from following the servant: and she waited his return with fearful anxiety.

At length he came, and said his master would see her if she was quite alone; and Ellen, trembling and agitated, ascended the stairs to her father's room.

He took no notice of her coming in; and when she saw his pallid and disturbed countenance, her feelings nearly overcame her. She knelt by his bed-side, and taking his wasted hand, which, though not withdrawn, was not stretched out to receive her, pressed it to her lips, and, with tears in her eyes, thanked him for admitting her.

Regardless of her affection, he seemed determined to make no answer; but looking to the servant, he asked for the draught he had been ordered to take at that time.

"If I do not think of these things myself," said he, "you never will."

The man hastened to give it to him; but Ellen said, "Let me pour it out; I will give it to my father; I am come to be his nurse: won't you let me, sir?" continued she, with a supplicating look, as she offered him the cup. He faintly thanked her, but said, "he did not want a nurse."

"But you will not deny me the pleasure of attending you?" said she, venturing to touch his cheek with her lips. "My father always wished to give me pleasure."

The feelings which her gentle voice inspired seemed greatly to oppress him; and ordering the

man to leave the room, he drew her nearer to his embrace, and exclaimed, "Oh! you are my child! but Ellen, you know not what a miserable being I am! I deserve not the name of father: I have ruined you!"

The big tears which rolled down his pale wan face prevented further utterance; while he seemed astonished at his own emotion, and pushing her away from him, he exclaimed, "Go—get away! you make a baby of me!"

"No, my father," replied Ellen, her tears accompanying his, "I cannot leave you: are the feelings of a parent any disgrace? Do but say you love me, and that is all I wish!"

"How can I do otherwise?" said he, still more softened: "but when you know all, you cannot, will not think it."

"I wish not to know anything else at present," returned Ellen, pressing his hand: "if you will let me stay and pay you every attention in my power, it is all I am anxious for. But we will talk no more to-night," continued she—"it may fatigue you; to-morrow, perhaps, you will see my aunt; she is come with me."

"And who is the gentleman Robinson told me of?" inquired her father.

"Mr. Herbert," replied Ellen; "that good man would not let us take so long a journey, and so late in the day, without his accompanying us."

"He is a good man," said Mr. Stanley; "too good for me to see."

Ellen made no answer; but ringing the bell, she inquired who sat up with her father.

"I do, madam," answered Robinson; "I am his only attendant."

"Robinson is very good," said Mr. Stanley; "but I know not how I shall reward him;" and desiring Ellen to take care of herself and friends, he expressed a wish to see her early the next morning.

She left them with a heart overflowing with gratitude to her Heavenly Father, and related to her aunt and Mr. Herbert, with tears of joy, the reception she had gained. But there was still a thoughtful melancholy on the countenance of each, which she could not account for.

"Has nobody offered you any refreshment?" said she; "surely the servants are not so attentive as usual; let me order a fire and supper to be brought in; you have been sitting in the cold all this time, and I have never thought of it."

Mr. Herbert then told her they had seen Robinson, and that he with one female servant were the only domestics her father then had in the house.

She was a little startled at this intelligence, and inquired the cause.

"Robinson tells us, that as his master seldom spent any time at home, he thought them only encumbrances; and that, about a week before he was taken ill, he discharged all the rest; but this," continued Mr. Herbert, "we must not flatter you is the only reason:" and he then, in the gentlest manner, informed her of the report Mr. Campbell had brought to Milwood, and which the state they found the family in too clearly confirmed.

The calm composure with which Ellen heard this confirmation of her fears discovered how well she was prepared for any change of fortune. Its diminution, or even total loss, seemed nothing to her, if she could retain her father's love, and see him happy; and her rapid imagination already formed a hundred plans of what she would do to reconcile him to his situation.

The maid-servant then entered the room, and, with many apologies, offered to conduct them to another parlor, where a fire and a supper were provided for their refreshment; but the various ideas which crowded Ellen's mind as she passed through these apartments, which she had formerly beheld full of company, and the recollection of those gay and giddy scenes, took from her all inclination to eat, and she sat silently musing on the vicissitudes which, even in her short life, she had experienced.

Mrs. Irvin had again recourse to anticipated pleasures.—"You found no satisfaction like what, I hope, you will in future enjoy, my dear," said she, "in all the follies of the world."

"Ah!" said Ellen, sighing, "it is their follies I regret: pleasure or satisfaction I am sure I never felt while I was engaged in them: but I am sorry that so many are mistaken in the path they choose."

Mr. Herbert feared to pursue this subject; but after the cloth was removed, by his religious and friendly conversation, he led her mind to rest on the Almighty for assistance and support.

Before they parted for the night, they joined in prayer; and, imploring the aid and protection of their Creator, they retired to sleep with grateful and composed affections toward God and the world.

CHAPTER XII.

"In prosperity, the bountiful Giver is obscured by the multitude of his own gifts; but when the tempest of adversity descends, this cloud is dispersed, and man, desolate and forlorn, feels the necessities of his nature, his weakness and dependance, his hopelessness, and need of Divine aid; and returns repentant to duty, to happiness, and to GOD."

When Mr. Herbert and Mrs. Irvin were the next morning introduced to Mr. Stanley, he was too polite not to appear obliged by their visit, though it was evident he felt embarrassed in their company. They observed his silence, however, and after the first compliments at meeting were over, soon left the room, under the excuse of fearing to fatigue him by too long a stay.

When again alone with his daughter, she, willing to remove the chagrin which still disturbed his countenance, asked if he had seen the Arnolds very lately. "Oh, no! they would not come to visit a sick man, and one who is poor also; in short, my dear," said he, with a sigh, "no one but yourself would think it worth their while to come near me: you I knew I had injured, and therefore I was unwilling to see you; but to my friends in town, as they were falsely called, I never did a wrong, but, while in my power, I always contributed to their amusement; and now they find I can no longer promote this, they are gone to seek another dupe!"

This was spoken with such an air of regret and wounded pride, that Ellen was sorry she had led to the subject; but with a smile of affection she answered: "And you, my dear father, will, I hope, seek other friends; I know some who will deserve that name, if you will allow them it. —At Milwood we are all friends, and as much so in adversity as in prosperity. I should think the change of air and scene would help your recovery also," added she: "my aunt means to offer you part of her house, if you will accept it. There it shall be my endeavor to remove every uneasiness you may have, and by my earnest attention and sincere affection to add to your future happiness."

Again softened by her tenderness, he pressed her to his bosom. "If anything could give balm to a wounded mind," said he, "it would be such kind regard as yours, my Ellen: but I am not worthy of it."

Ellen, with increased emotion, assured him all her future life should be employed in convincing him to the contrary: and then, by his desire, went to beg Mr. Herbert's return to him for a short time.

This request was readily complied with; and, won by the friendly interest this good man seemed to take in all that concerned him, Mr. Stanley laid before him all his pecuniary affairs. His debts of honor appeared considerable in Mr. Herbert's eyes; though their whole amount could not be ascertained till farther inquiries were made. Mr. Stanley blamed himself for playing for the very high sums he had lately staked, but he acknowledged there were still other debts; and his

new friend encouraged him to look into them without delay.

The attorney was therefore sent for, and, after many arrangements, all was left to his management; and Mr. Stanley listened with complacency to the scheme both Mrs. Irvin and his daughter had proposed, of his returning to Milwood with them, as the society of Mr. Herbert appeared every day more agreeable to him.

His house in town, with all its furniture, was disposed of; and in about a month after Ellen had, with so much anxiety, hastened to a parent whom she feared to find dying, she had the satisfaction of returning with him to the place of all others she most wished, with composed spirits; and though still unwell, with greater appearance of amended health than, when she first saw him, she could allow herself to hope.

The change was such as Mr. Stanley had never before experienced; for when, before, he had left the town, it was only to meet the same company, and the same pursuits, in some fashionable watering-place: but he was now really in the country, and in the midst of winter; with no other companions than an old woman and a young girl, both so attached to their own plan of happiness (a sketch of which the reader has seen), that they concluded there was none other capable of affording it; and yet Mr. Stanley did not wish himself away. Here he had time to reflect; and he was astonished at the recollection of his former life, dependant on so many people for amusement and employment; for often he had flown to the former, as a means of passing away the hours

that hung heavily on his hands, but at Milwood he never found a vacant hour. Without his old pursuits,—no tavern or coffee-house to lounge in, where he met with companions like himself, who were drawn together merely for the sake of killing time,—here he met with real attention: Ellen, and often Mr. Herbert, left their own employments, to amuse or converse with him.

Every morning after breakfast, while he was in too weak a state to be much out of the house, Ellen first read to him, then played or sang; and soon his old taste for music returned, and he became again a performer. The books he read tended farther to illustrate those important truths that Mr. Herbert in his conversation inculcated, and in his conduct practised.

Here, too, Mr. Stanley saw a uniform respect paid to the Sabbath,—that day which, if properly spent, adds grace and happiness to all the rest; and by the example of those about him, he was led to attend the church, and, like them also, he found comfort in so doing.—He had all his life been seeking after happiness; but now, when nearly driven to despair, he came desponding, and not expecting, or scarcely wishing, to discover it in the country, he found, in a quiet peaceful life, dedicated to religion and the good of others, the truest enjoyment; leaving far behind him the world, and all its visionary plans, he became acquainted with a higher source of pleasure, and was imperceptibly led to admit the claims of reason in its favor, which the falsely named gayeties he had hitherto pursued would allow him no time to consider.

The little Campbells often afforded him much entertainment, and not seldom instruction also. Even these children had been taught to see things in a more comprehensive view than he did; and in all their conclusions, there was a reference to the world to come, as well as to this.

Mr. Stanley would ask them questions which a false shame often prevented his putting to others; and their answers, though given in all the simplicity of childhood, were such as often produced serious consideration in his mind.

The elder Miss Campbell sometimes amused him with her music; but the little boys and girls were his favorite companions; and he was so good a friend to them, that they were always happy in his company.

As the spring advanced, Mr. Stanley's health was quite restored; and Ellen was made still more happy, by observing his inclinations perfectly accommodated to his situation. He walked every day, sometimes alone, or with her and Mrs. Irvin; and afterward took a ride either with Mr. Herbert or Mr. Campbell. There was nothing contradictory in the conversation of those he was now with; all, from the least even to the greatest, united in their opinions, and their actions agreed with their words. It was this uniformity which led Mr. Stanley seriously to conclude that the truth was on their side: as all were happy and contented, even among the poor, with whom he often conversed, and wherever peace and comfort seemed to dwell, these sentiments were the source from which they arose.

The ensuing season was the happiest Ellen

ever knew; her father became more and more attached to her, and he delighted to see her conscientiously following the path of duty, without allowing herself to lessen her exertions in doing good.

In the course of this year Miss Campbell married; and after a few days spent at her father's house, this excellent young woman was removed to a larger sphere of action, as the gentleman to whom she was united possessed a large estate in a distant county. Thither some of her sisters went to visit her every year; and they always returned with some happy account of her goodness. "That she was quite another Mrs. Irvin in the place where she lived," was the character they gave of her; and the poor in her neighborhood were grateful in their acknowledgments of the kindness she was continually showing them. The greatest grief that Ellen could know, next to the death of her father and aunt, was that of Mr. Herbert; and she was soon called to this trial, though not till she had seen every good effect she could wish from his society with her father. This worthy man glorified God in his death; and, thankfully resigning his life into the hands of Him who gave it, and who made it so eminently useful, he entered into a happier world, without a sigh for that he left. The whole parish of Milwood, to whom he had for so many years been a faithful pastor, mourned his loss; though their grief was lessened on hearing that the younger Mr. Campbell, whose sentiments and manners were so like his own, was to succeed him as their minister.

In a short time, Ellen became his wife ; and a house which had been built for some of their friends, who were now prevented from inhabiting it, was fitted up for their reception.

About this time, also, poor old Dame Hunt died, who had been long confined to her bed, and was supported by the care of Betsy Forbes : and now Ellen took both her and her sister into her family ; the former became her own servant, and Mary, though prevented by her misfortune from being as useful as she wished, was not without employment.

Mr. Stanley and Mrs. Irvin still inhabited the same house, and had the satisfaction of seeing Ellen following the education she had herself received, in that of her own children, of whom she had a numerous family.

In a few years this affectionate and best beloved aunt was taken from her, to receive a crown of life through the merits of her Savior, whose faithful servant she had so long been. Ellen was with her till the last breath of life was expired ; but the certainty of the happiness promised to all whose sincerity of faith and profession is proved, like this excellent woman's, by a uniform life and conduct, and which she could not doubt she was now enjoying, precluded all unseasonable sorrow.

On the death of Mrs. Irvin, her faithful Martin once more became a careful and affectionate nurse, and performed that office to the children of her beloved young mistress, with the same tender affection she had formerly shown to herself.

As her aunt had left all her property to the

younger Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, Ellen again became an inhabitant of Milwood Lodge. Mr. Herbert and Mrs. Irvin seemed once more to live in this worthy pair; and both the parents of these their excellent representatives lived to see them rear

"A numerous offspring, lovely, like themselves,
And good—the grace of all the country round."

THE END

Christmas Eve. 25th 1845

Was a damp cold
day in Williamston —